

REMEMBERING
MICHAEL KELLY
PETER BEINART

SPRING BOOKS:
RICHARD JENKYNs, BENNY MORRIS,
TZVETAN TODOROV

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

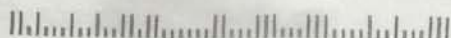


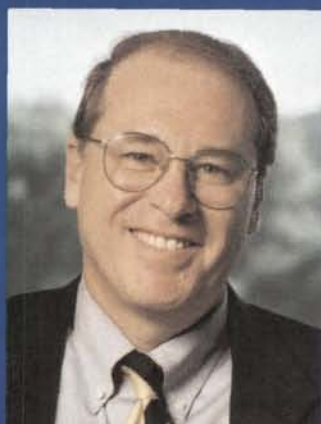
THE FINAL WAR

Why Iran and Syria
Are Not Next

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN
ELI J. LAKE

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Under our system, it is not unusual for two students who have learned the same amount to be labeled (and rewarded) quite differently in different states. One might be deemed to be proficient while the other may be required to do remedial work.

There is no national requirement for what students must learn. But there is the "nation's report card," which gives us a benchmark for how we are doing. For nearly 35 years, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been periodically assessing students across the nation. NAEP is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of the educational achievement of American fourth-, eighth-, and 12th-grade students.

No student gets an individual score, but the nation clearly gets a grade. So far, we're

not passing. In 2000, NAEP revealed that only about one in four students in fourth and eighth grades were proficient in mathematics. At high school, it is even worse – only one in every six 12th graders reached the proficient level.

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act* has put considerable pressure on states and school districts to improve student performance. Each state will measure progress somewhat differently, but we will continue to have NAEP sampling to provide that national benchmark. Policymakers—and taxpayers—at every level are investing a great deal of money in schools. We need good data to know how that investment is paying off.

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Ronald Steel, Cass R. Sunstein,
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Alan Wolfe, Robert Wright

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Jack Coughlin, David Cowles,
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Noam Scheiber, Jason Zengerle

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ART/DESIGN DIRECTION

Joe Heroun, Christine Car/H2C Media

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CORRESPONDENCE

SAD SONGS

MICHAEL B. OREN HAS MANY COMPLAINTS about Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist*, but what seems to bother him most is that its protagonist, Wladyslaw Szpilman, is just not his kind of Jew ("Schindler's List," March 17). Nor mine, for that matter. But what of it? Szpilman was one of a dazzling variety among the millions of Jews who perished in the Holocaust—Hasidim and atheists, Zionists and communists, tone-deaf tailors and gifted musicians, heroes and cowards—and it is precisely this richness and diversity of the prewar European Jewish civilization that makes its loss so devastating and irreplaceable. Contrary to his protestations, Oren so dislikes Polanski's powerful and historically responsible film not because it in any way distorts the Holocaust (it does not!) but because it does not draw from it the precise nationalist morals of his own brand of Zionist historiography. Polanski has given us a dramatic true story from the Holocaust, not a historical documentary.

The last line of Oren's review informs the entire piece: "Is it really so difficult to represent the Jew as a full and free-willed human being, without diluting the horror?" No, but that would be a deeply distorted representation of most of the Holocaust's victims. There was nothing "full and free-willed" about the millions who walked obediently to the gas chambers. The Zionists understood this passivity to be the central, mortal defect of European Jewry long before the Holocaust, and Israel has thankfully bred generations of "full and free-willed" Jews. But Zionism's wisdom, while impressively prophetic in retrospect, in no way diminishes the human dignity of the Holocaust's victims, nor does it mandate a false reconstruction of the pre-Holocaust Jewish condition. Polanski's portrait of Szpilman is so very moving precisely on account of its simple honesty and accuracy.

What many viewers have found most compelling about *The Pianist* is exactly what seems most to offend Oren: that Szpilman is not a hero of the Jews; that his Judaism is largely an accident of birth; that what he most wanted was not to die in a blaze of glorious Jewish resistance but just to keep his fingers warm so that he might live to play his piano again. Far from detracting from

the lessons of the Holocaust, his story adds a universal dimension that even a Zionist like me found more moving than in any previous cinematic treatment of this theme.

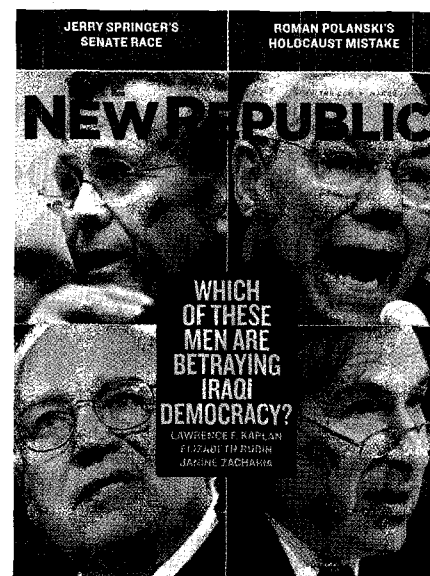
ALLAN NADLER
Director, Jewish Studies Program
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey

OREN VIEWS *THE PIANIST* AS A plot to improve Europe's image. But do viewers really go away thinking, "How wonderfully noble and generous those Poles were"? The viewer is more likely to believe that Szpilman survived the railway station and his encounter with Wilm Hosenfeld because he was incredibly lucky. And how is Szpilman a "Christ-like" figure? He does not die, he does not preach forgiveness or renounce vengeance, and he survives because he is lucky enough to have Gentile friends who appreciate his talents and protect him. Oren argues that Polanski believes that Nazi evil was an aberration that can be redeemed. Every film Polanski has made shows that he does not hold such a simple-minded view.

PAUL NOTLEY
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

UNITED STATE

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN IS DANGEROUSLY wrong in claiming that only a federal Iraq can be a democratic Iraq ("Federal Reserve," March 17). The danger of federalism in ethnically divided states is that regional parties will consider their states more legitimate than the national government. Therein lie the seeds of secessionism and democratic destruction. However, a centralized and rigid power-sharing arrangement, à la Lebanon, is not the only alternative. An interim solution would be to hold an election as soon as possible in a single nationwide district (with some high threshold, say 10 percent, required for rep-



resentation). Each region's election turnout could be used as a basis for subsequent sub-national boundaries, thereby giving regional leaders an incentive to mobilize democratically within a unitary Iraq. Then, the national assembly would be the forum for negotiating devolution of authority. Modeled on the process by which Spain created regional governments for the Basques and others to sidestep violent secessionists, this mechanism would ensure that regional groups act within national-level institutions because their own future autonomy depends on their representation at the center and their ability to bargain with leaders of other regions. This is a slow track to federalism with better prospects for keeping Iraq together—and democratic—than any precipitous move to create states or cantons and hold regional elections.

MATTHEW SHUGART
Professor of Political Science
Graduate School of International Relations
& Pacific Studies
University of California
San Diego, California

Please address letters to Correspondence, **The New Republic**, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005; letters may also be sent electronically to tnr@aol.com. All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

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Personal Best

MICHAEL KELLY DIED LAST week covering the war in Iraq. And, in many of the obituaries written since, you can detect a hint of anxiety, a fear that people who knew him only from his columns — first in this space as TRB, then in *The Washington Post* — would remember him differently from how he really was. That's understandable. In his columns, Mike could be combative, aggressive, unyielding. In life, he was gentle, warm, playful. And so, people who loved him have emphasized the distinction between the way he viewed politics and the way he lived his life.

But Mike's politics also grew out of his life. I remember the day, years ago, when he told me why he loathed Bill Clinton. Evidently, a cadre of older ladies had answered the White House phones since time immemorial. When Clinton took office, Mike told me, he quietly fired them and installed twentysomething former campaign aides in their place.

Why did that offend Mike so deeply? First, because he was a traditionalist, even an anachronist. He drove a 30-year-old car; he consumed literature and history rather than news; his editing often made long articles longer. When he first learned how to check his e-mail — several years after most other Americans had been regularly checking theirs — he noted with amusement that a great many people had been trying to reach him.

Mike's traditionalism made him a conservative, but not of the contemporary Washington variety. Many of today's "conservatives" are in love with theory, with efficiency, with remaking the world according to the abstractions in their minds. Mike was a conservative in the older, cultural sense. He wanted to preserve the unwritten rules, built up imperceptibly over time, that define morality in most people's lives. He revered the old-fashioned Capitol Hill neighborhood in which he grew up, and he believed that such communities developed organic standards of conduct far more subtle and dignified than outsiders understood, standards that needed to be protected from the sledgehammer of ideology and law. In Mike's view, the primary threat to those standards came from self-righteous liberalism — with its intrusive mandates about smoking, gender relations, and shoveling the snow from your sidewalk. But conservatives could threaten them as well. Some on the contem-



porary right might have fired those old ladies at the White House in the name of efficiency; others might have done so for the greater good of the conservative movement. Mike would have loathed that, too.

One of the reasons Mike revered these norms and traditions was that he noticed them. He had an amazing eye for concrete things, and he refused to paper over them with distancing generalizations. In a particularly memorable dispatch from the first Gulf war, he introduced one Captain Douglas Morrison, "the voice of the new American army, ... a crisp, assured mix of casual toughness, techno-idolatrous jargon, and nonsensical euphemisms — the voice of delivery systems and collateral damage and kicking ass." And then he described what U.S. cluster bombs had done to the Iraqi troops fleeing Kuwait: "One man had tried to escape to Iraq in a Kawasaki front-end loader. His remaining half-body lay hanging upside down and out of his exposed seat, the left side and bottom blown away to tatters, with the charred leg fully fifteen feet away."

Mike supported that war, but, unlike Captain Morrison, he didn't sanitize it. He looked the viciousness of U.S. warfare in the eye. And he compared it with the far greater viciousness he had seen in Kuwait in 1991, where he had watched a grown man "crying, in short, harsh, shuddering sobs" as he recounted being tortured by Saddam Hussein's men. This February, Mike wrote, "Tyranny truly is a horror: an immense, endlessly bloody, endlessly painful, endlessly varied, endless crime against not humanity in the abstract but a lot of humans in the flesh. ... I do not understand why they [doves] do not see that anything is better than life with your face under the boot." They do not see because they refuse to look tyranny in the eye. Mike did. He had witnessed war and witnessed unjust peace. He chose between the two without illusions, and it was this honesty as a reporter that gave his opinions their moral power.

There was a second reason Mike cared so much about the firing of those old ladies. He

judged politicians as human beings. His politics were less ideological than characterological. He believed that some people acted with honor, and others did not. And the people who acted without honor in their private lives would act without honor in their public lives, especially toward the weak. For him, that's why Clinton's personal conduct mattered — because, if Clinton betrayed those ladies, he would betray Rwanda as well. And, I suspect, it's why he respected George W. Bush — because he believed that Bush's private decency would shape his presidency. Maybe Mike viewed things that way because he wrote political profiles before he began writing columns. He saw history not as the result of grand, impersonal currents but of individual will. "Only three people really matter as to the outcome," he wrote about the Iraq war. "The Iraqi dictator, the American president and the British prime minister. The first Gulf War occurred because all three were resolute. ... The whole thing was deeply personal, a matter of what was bred in the bones of these three."

It made sense that Mike saw politics as a function of personal honor because it was personal honor that defined him. When he told me the story about Clinton and the White House telephone ladies, he had just taken over as editor of *THE NEW REPUBLIC*. He was also a new boss, and I was also an inherited employee. He wasn't only telling me about Bill Clinton; he was telling me about himself.

In Mike's view, the reason to have power was to protect, and lift up, other people. He was the least narcissistic famous person I ever met; he disdained self-promotion, but he basked in the success of the people he nurtured. He was courteous and tender to those who worked for him but fierce on their behalf. He seemed to relish battling outsiders who threatened the people in his care. Perhaps that is another reason he liked Bush. Like the president, Mike was a loyalist. He fought harder on your behalf than you fought for yourself.

These were Mike's moral rules, unwritten but defined through lived experience. And, if you witnessed them up close, it wasn't hard to see why Mike believed in a powerful America deploying its might on behalf of the powerless, the people he saw under tyranny's boot in Saddam-controlled Kuwait.

Mike once told me a story about his eldest son, Tom. Tom, he said, was a gentle boy who hated to fight. But he was strong, and, when he saw someone getting picked on, he invariably jumped into the fray. Of course he did, I remember thinking. He's Mike Kelly's son.

PETER BEINART

Small Fries

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES has not exactly risen to meet our present world-historical moment. After France opposed invading Iraq this winter, congressional Republicans acted like a petulant band of Bill O'Reillys. French fries were replaced in House cafeterias by "freedom fries," conservatives tried to kill a contract with a French firm to feed U.S. Marines, and a Colorado representative demanded an end to the use of

French-made headstones at Arlington National Cemetery.

These were largely symbolic, if infantile, gestures. But, now that the United States is planning for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, congressional conservatives want to make their childishness concrete by preventing any country that opposes the war from sharing in postwar reconstruction contracts potentially worth more than \$100 billion in total. Last week, the House backed such a measure, and although it appears stalled for now, conservatives vow to press on. "The whole notion that France wants to be part of the reconstruction process takes a lot of chutzpah," said House Majority Leader Tom DeLay last month. "I think France, Germany, Belgium, Russia, China have removed themselves from this process by causing the United Nations, frankly, to be irrelevant in what's going on."

Gratifying as it may feel, this latest round of Euro-bashing is foolhardy. After triumphing over Iraq militarily, the United States can afford to be magnanimous, thereby showing the world that U.S. foreign policy is not a zero-sum game. Indeed, the need for broad international support for America's postwar efforts in Iraq clearly outweighs the cheap thrill of giving the European crowd its comeuppance. Sharing contracts will win the United States both the financial and political support it needs to effectively rebuild Iraq.

The first reason for spreading the reconstruction wealth is economic. The cost

of building a stable, democratic Iraq will be immense — \$20 billion per year, according to a March estimate by the Council of Foreign Relations. (Some of this money will presumably come from Iraqi oil exports, but experts warn that it will take years to get the country's decrepit oil infrastructure up to capacity.) If the United States shoulders this burden largely alone, perhaps with help from Great Britain, our deficit-bound budget will groan under the weight. Worse, once the drama of war has passed, Congress may well lose interest in Iraq and begin to shortchange its reconstruction. That would not only undermine our essential long-term goals, it would vindicate every critic who insisted we wouldn't follow through with nation-building once Saddam was deposed.

Giving a broad array of other nations a stake in reconstruction, however, is the best way to make sure reconstruction actually takes place. Governments in nations whose companies are making handy profits pumping oil and building bridges will have an interest in paying for security and stability by training police and a new Iraqi military — or even contributing peacekeeping forces of their own. Certainly, given congressional Republican stinginess, the willingness of other countries to write checks has been crucial to building stability in the wake of

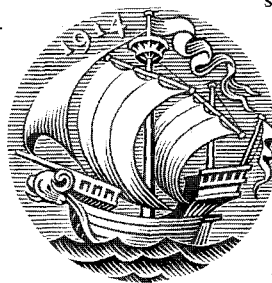
other recent U.S. wars. After the 1999 Kosovo bombing campaign, the European Union was the largest contributor of humanitarian relief and reconstruction aid: \$3 billion over the first two years, compared with \$900 million from the United States over the same period. And, when the United States pledged just \$300 million to rebuild Afghanistan in 2002, several European and Asian countries pledged an extra \$4.2 billion. Indeed, it's only thanks to the presence of Turkish and German peacekeepers that Kabul is a reasonably safe city today.

But there's another, less tangible reason countries such as France and Germany should be allowed some postwar contracts. The United States needs to prove to the world that its invasion of Iraq was not driven, as perhaps billions of people still assume, by crass commercial motives. The perception that the United States invaded Iraq so Halliburton can begin pumping oil for Exxon is shockingly widespread and is a major part of the reason the Bush administration had so much difficulty winning world public opinion for its Iraq campaign.

Those who would shut out non-"coalition of the willing" nations from Iraqi reconstruction argue that defiance of U.S. interests must not go unpunished. "The governments of France and Germany chose to sit on the sidelines while the United States and our allies are ousting a bloodthirsty dictator," Republican Senator John Ensign said after trying to pass such a ban last week. "I could not sit by and allow those countries to make millions [of dollars]." Sometimes children must be spanked, in other words. But,

beyond some measure of satisfaction, what would the United States really gain? Large democracies such as France, Germany, and Russia cannot simply be bullied to our side. After all, the Bush administration has already tried bullying, and it failed to convince

Berlin or Paris to join the battle against Saddam. The best route to winning broader international support for America's ongoing war on terror and weapons proliferation is to win over international public opinion — as we might if we show some magnanimity. If it means the French will help us pay our bills, surely even DeLay could show a little restraint. He'll still have his freedom fries. ■



NOTEBOOK

DELAy PRIORITIZES . . . THE MILITARY PROSELYTIZES . . . DASCHLE SOCIALIZES

TOM'S WAR

EVERY NOW AND THEN, A POLITICIAN will, through accident or poor judgment, say something that tells you everything you need to know about him. (It is usually a him.) Bill Clinton's contention that "it depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is" captured forever his evasiveness and moral relativism; Dan Quayle's mangling of the United Negro College Fund motto, "What a waste it is to lose one's mind. Or not to have a mind is being very wasteful," couldn't help but suggest that he perhaps spoke from experience.

Recently, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay joined this proud fraternity. For weeks, Republicans have been racking their brains for a way to attach an unpopular tax cut to a popular war (see Jonathan Chait, "Home Front," April 7). White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer explained that the latest cuts were a way to ensure that "when the war is over, our military has jobs to come home to"—a touching sentiment, though rather misplaced given that when our professional, all-volunteer military "comes home" they will continue to have jobs in the military. Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison voiced concern that, "when our troops are over there fighting, we don't want partisan bickering to be what they see on television from back home." Leave it to DeLay, the House majority leader, to abandon such delicate arguments. Appearing before a meeting of bankers a few weeks ago, he declared, rather astonishingly, "Nothing is more important in the face of a war than cutting taxes."

Nothing? Off the tops of our heads we would have imagined that perhaps protecting U.S. borders or limiting American casualties or even ensuring a just peace would be "more important in the face of a war" than cutting taxes. But DeLay has put us straight, once again serving as the id of his party, the primordial lizard brain



Tom DeLay

of Republican orthodoxy. In its current form, that orthodoxy maintains that tax cuts favoring the wealthy are a de facto good—in peace and in war, in good times and in bad, when we can afford them and when we cannot. For this clarification we can thank Tom DeLay.

WATER BEARER

MANY COMMENTATORS WORRY that, in its occupation of Iraq, the U.S. military will be insufficiently sensitive to the religious beliefs of that overwhelmingly Muslim country. But few thought it necessary to be concerned about the military's sensitivity to the religious beliefs of its *own troops*. For example, near Najaf in southern Iraq, water shortages have meant that thousands of soldiers in the Army's 5th Corps have been unable to bathe for weeks—or would have been unable to if not for Army Chaplain Josh Llano. Llano, a self-described "Southern Baptist evangelist" has under his control a 500-gallon pool

of clean, cool water in which soldiers can bathe—provided that they submit to two and a half hours of sermonizing and baptism. "It's simple," the enterprising chaplain told *The Miami Herald*. "They want water. I have it, as long as they agree to get baptized. . . . You have to be aggressive to help people find themselves in God." Llano's "aggressive" efforts aren't only a demeaning exploitation of the servicemen and women risking their lives to disarm Saddam Hussein; they're also an utter abrogation of the Army's "Chaplain Requirements," which require chaplains to be "[s]ensitive to religious pluralism and able to provide for the free exercise of religion by all military personnel." The Army told TNR it is "seeking additional information" on the matter. We certainly hope so.

THE COMPANY YOU KEEP

I REALLY ADMIRE DAVID BROCK," announced Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle at a party he co-hosted last week to celebrate the paperback publication of Brock's *Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*. Minority Whip Harry Reid seconded his boss's sentiment, declaring, "David, you've given us inspiration to fight—and fighting we are. And I think you'll see a new Democratic Party in the future." We shudder to think what this "new," Brock-inspired Democratic Party would look like.

Brock, of course, is the journalist who in the early '90s built his career on a series of tawdry, widely refuted right-wing hatchet jobs in *The American Spectator*—the best-known being "The Real Anita Hill," which declared its subject "a little bit nutty and a little bit slutty," and the "Troopergate" story, which introduced the world to "Paula," i.e. Paula Jones. In *Blinded by the Right*, Brock supposedly renounces his sleazy, journalistic past. His Anita Hill reporting, he confesses, was "sloppy, skewed, slanderous material," "a witches' brew of

fact, allegation, hearsay, speculation, opinion, and invective"; "Troopergate" was "not fit to print, ... a mix of circumstantial observation and rumor." But, rather than a departure from this kind of innuendo-laden, ad hominem reporting, Brock's book is actually a continuation—this time with conservative targets. Ann Coulter, Laura Ingraham, and Arianna Huffington are "right-wing fag hags"; Juanita Broadrick's rape allegation against Bill Clinton was probably an effort "to get herself out of trouble with her boyfriend"; Richard Mellon Scaife was "linked" to two suspicious suicides. The book contains a few errors or misrepresentations—e.g., though Brock contends that a seminal moment in his embrace of conservatism occurred when, as an undergraduate at Berkeley, he saw students heckle a speech by Jeane Kirkpatrick, he did not write an article about it for the next day's student paper as he claims. And a handful of Brock's subjects dispute his descriptions of interactions with them.

But let us be clear: David Brock is, by his own admission, a liar. He lied when he was a youthful liberal, and he lied when he was a not-quite-so-youthful conservative. Whether he lied in his latest book is, in some ways, beside the point: It is a toxic smear job of nearly everyone who wandered into Brock's careerist orbit in the '90s—

sources, employers, colleagues, friends. And, if Tom Daschle and Harry Reid find "inspiration" in that, the Democratic Party is in more trouble than anyone realizes.

HOME NEWS

LAST MONTH, WE WERE DELIGHTED to announce in this space that Samantha Power's book, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, published by New Republic Books (Basic Books) had been awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction. This month, we are more delighted still to announce that she has now added the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction to her trophy case. To those who have already read Power's wrenching account of America's foreign policy failures in the '90s, this latest honor will come as no surprise; to those who have not, we can only hope it will serve as an incentive.

READ THE FINE PRINT

A NUMBER OF CAREFUL READERS of this magazine have brought to our attention a shortcoming of our otherwise flawless redesign: The type, they inform us, is too small. If you are one of the readers who has so notified us, or if you belong to the multitude who have suffered in silence, rest assured that your concerns will be addressed in the near future. ■

Inside the Box | Bruce Reed

ON THE RUN Bush gave up sweets before war to improve his running time: "Too bad Saddam didn't do the same!"

SURVIVOR

Ari says it doesn't matter whether Saddam is dead or alive: "We already proved that with Osama bin Laden."



LET'S ROLL White House holds Easter Egg Roll for families of troops: "It's about time somebody found something at a presidential palace."

FAITH, NOT WORKS Commerce Secretary Don Evans says Bush believes he was called by God to lead us through these times: "His election wasn't an accident—it was a miracle!"

PETROLEUM CLUB U.S. says U.N. won't be a player in overseeing Iraqi oil industry: "You said you didn't want to be part of a war for oil!"

BIRD MEN Senate passes billions for airlines but not \$30 million to protect jetliners from surface-to-air missiles: "With what they're paying their CEOs, those planes will never get off the ground anyway."

COLOR BLOCKING

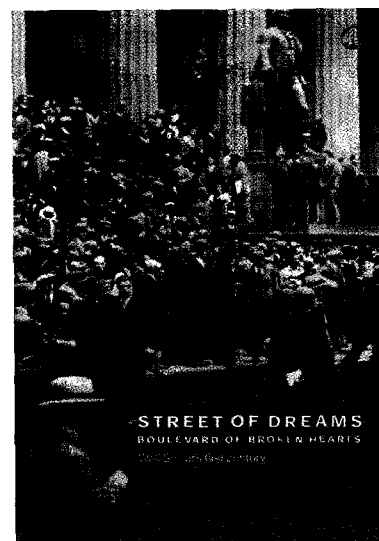
War coverage hits new low with debate over Torie Clarke's loud wardrobe. Memo to pundits: Tom Ridge is the one whose color choices scare us.



FOLK SONG ARMY Kucinich starts antiwar speeches by singing medley of patriotic songs. Audience reaction: "That's enough to make anyone pray for peace."

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Remembering Michael Kelly. In Memoriam

Last week, Michael Kelly, who edited THE NEW REPUBLIC from 1996 to 1997, died while traveling as an embedded reporter with the Army's 3rd Infantry Division in Iraq. Michael's association with TNR began when he covered the first Gulf war, for which he won a National Magazine Award. It was through his courageous, eloquent reporting that this magazine came to understand the importance, for the United States and the world, of a free Iraq at peace with its neighbors. In tribute, we reprint excerpts from his March 18, 1991, dispatch from that war, "Kiss of Victory."

I had thought from the moment the first bomb dropped on Baghdad that the match-up between Saddam Hussein and a good portion of the civilized world was wildly one-sided, but the staggering, lunatic scope of the disaster he visited on his people did not actually bring tears to my eyes until the moment here, on the third day of the ground war, when I took my first, and I hope my last, prisoners of war.

I was driving down the abandoned highway to Kuwait City with my friend Dan Fesperman, a correspondent for *The Baltimore Sun*. We were "doing a unilateral," the press corps' term for getting around the Pentagon's press pool restrictions by ignoring them. I'd been told there was no way I was going to get on a good pool anyway—maybe deck space on a ship in the Red Sea, if I was lucky. So we drove to the war—over the desert, past a couple of checkpoints, and into Kuwait, being careful to avoid American patrols. We had heard that the day before a carload of British hacks had been stopped by American troops. Their officer radioed his commander, who told him that reporters not in a pool should be detained and treated as prisoners of war. The officer decided instead to look the other way while the Brits got the hell out of there, but the story made us wary. . . .

[W]e were driving with care. The Iraqis had blown up the highway every quarter mile or so, which forced us periodically to swerve off the road and onto the desert, where we had to watch out for stray mine fields. Dan spotted the men first, at a distance of about half a mile, a ragged line of green blocking the road. "They are Iraqis, I think," he said. "You can tell from the uniform. . . . Do you think they're armed?"

We drove on gingerly and stopped the four-wheel drive a few feet from them. They were ten soldiers, most of them in their 30s and 40s, unarmed, clearly underfed, unshaven, wearing only light uniforms against the cold late-afternoon desert wind. One waved a white rag tied to a bamboo pole; another fluttered a dirty white handkerchief. They held their hands high over their heads and nervously advanced a few feet as we got out of the car.

"No, no," we said. "We are not soldiers. We are journalists. We are *Sahafi*." It didn't matter. The men begged to be taken in. They were cold, they said in broken English, and had already walked six kilometers from their trenches. "We afraid of

Saddam," said one. "Not afraid of Americans. United States is good. United States of America is good." Every other soldier in their unit had fled north, they said. "The Iraqi army is not here. Gone. Gone to Iraq."

We gave the men water and bread and chocolate bars, and cheese and salami, and little square cartons of orange drink, and left them. We said we would send someone to pick them up, and headed on toward the capital city. But it was getting dark, which is a bad time to get lost in a war, and then we came across a giant mine field, blocking the road and the desert for hundreds of yards on both sides. . . . So we turned back. We found the Iraqis still walking with their white flags before them and decided we could not leave them there. All ten managed to cram into the car: one in the front seat, four in back, and three fitted around the ten jerry cans of gasoline in the rear, with two standing on the bumper.

AFTER A COUPLE of miles we came across a supply column of the Fourth Tank Brigade of the Saudi army, heading to front-line headquarters. We flagged down a truck and told the driver the news.

Within moments thirty-five excited Saudi soldiers crowded around the Iraqis, slamming clips of ammunition into their automatic rifles and carrying on in tremendous excitement as they searched the prisoners. They threw the Iraqis' few possessions, and the food we had just given them, into the sand. One zealous Saudi soldier even grabbed a Koran one Iraqi had been clutching and tossed it aside. They made the terrified prisoners sit in a line, and they shouted and waved their rifles about. Half a dozen prisoners began weeping in fear and begging for their lives. The prisoner whose Koran had been taken away crawled over to retrieve it, and clutched it to his chest for protection as he moaned and rocked back and forth. Another plucked frantically at his hair and his crotch in little agonies of terror, and shouted for his God. But the Saudi troops eventually calmed down, and gave the Iraqis new packages of food, drink, and cigarettes. One young Saudi soldier soothed a distraught Iraqi by placing both hands on his shoulders and kissing him on the forehead. We left the prisoners in the care of a young Saudi lieutenant named Saud Otabi, whose beardless face shone with the pleasure of another glorious, bloodless victory.

It wasn't, after all, the Gulf War. It was the Gulf Rout. The Iraqi troops, hopelessly outgunned and outmaneuvered, never had the slightest chance. Nor, it seemed, did many of them want one. They just wanted to quit and go home. On the second day of the ground battle we drove with the Egyptian army through the Iraqi front lines. . . .

By midafternoon 530 Iraqi soldiers and twenty-two officers sat barefoot in the sand by the section of trench they had given up, their belongings dumped in a pathetic litter nearby: some cheap plastic combs, a few letters, a coin or two. Two men lay dead on the ground, one with blood soaking through

Donations in Michael Kelly's memory can be sent to: The Tom and Jack Kelly Education Fund, c/o Donna Papadopoulos, Sovereign Bank, 495 Paradise Road, Swampscott, Massachusetts 01907.

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An Anatomy of Ambition

Bent Flyvbjerg,

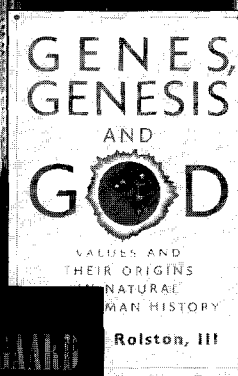
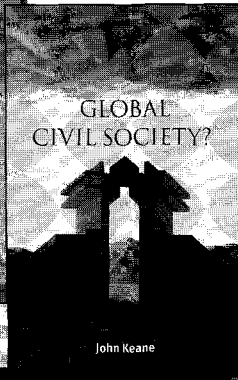
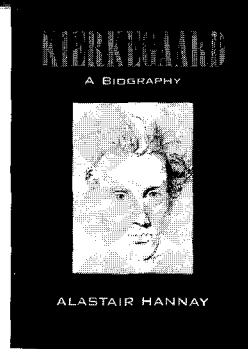
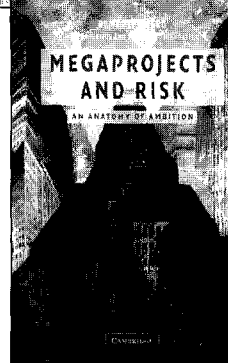
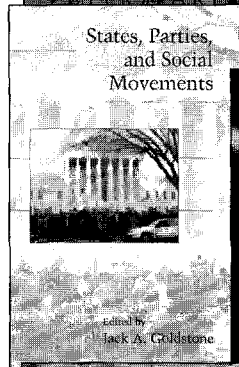
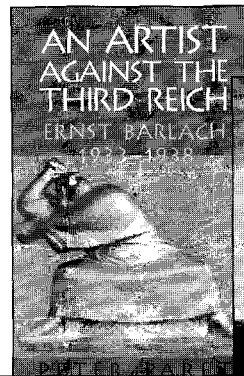
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his shirt front and back, his mouth gaping at the sky. ...

"Personally, I did not fight at all," said one Iraqi lieutenant in quite good English. "Not one bit, and I urged my men not to fight either. We had no wish to be attacked. When we saw we were safe, that was enough. We did not wish to fight. Why to fight? For what?" He smiled a small, bitter smile, and gestured at the barren land around him. "For Kuwait?"

The lieutenant and his men had only stayed in the trenches, he said, because "otherwise Saddam would hang our families—babies, girls, brothers. They did it many times." Even if the Iraqi soldiers had wished to fight, the impossibility of their plight was staggeringly obvious on the ground. It could be seen in the Egyptian attack, which—on just this one relatively small and lightly defended stretch—encompassed two battalions totaling 10,000 troops, hundreds of tanks, armored personnel carriers, self-propelled 155mm howitzers, jeeps, half-tracks, supply trucks, and so on and on in an ever moving supply line that stretched by day's end sixteen miles to the Saudi lines.

THE ATTACKING FORCES filled the eye to the horizon in every direction, and filled the ear too, with the thuds and booms and the shelling punctuated by the soft, sibilant whistle of ground-to-ground missiles, which left a puffy white trail against the gray sky. Arrayed against all this was a thin line of demoralized troops, in the kind of fixed defenses that went out with the Maginot Line. Iraqi prisoners said almost uniformly that they had been living in fear and hunger and great fatigue since the war began, and some of them complained that Saddam had pulled back the big guns that were to defend their positions before the attack even began. A garrison in the western desert town of Al Abraja, liberated on the third day by most of an entire Egyptian division, had only one, possibly broken, armored personnel carrier to defend it.

The 400 Iraqi soldiers left to defend the town were so eager to surrender that some of them ran out from their bunkers and gave themselves up to the division's commanding officer while he was making a tour of the perimeter accompanied by only two aides and a soldier. It is a measure of how weak the resistance was that the Egyptian attack was waged without any air support at all. By the end of the third day of battle, the day Saddam announced that he was, really and truly this time, pulling out of Kuwait right now, the fight was over. The allied generals were saying their troops would liberate Kuwait City within two days at most, but that was a very conservative estimate.

The invasion had become something akin to the world's largest cross-country drive. That afternoon we drove to the head of the lead Egyptian column, and for a while amused ourselves and the troops by taking a position in our Nissan Safari at the very front of the front. Behind us stretched an unbroken line of men and matériel that now went back forty-some miles without a worry in the world, or at least in the 19th province of Iraq. ■

Is America protecting its soldiers? Ill Treated

BY ALEX STONE

FROM A MEDICAL standpoint, the first Gulf war was a disaster. Of the 700,000 American men and women who returned from Operation Desert Storm, roughly 30 percent went on to file disability claims for a host of ailments, including skin lesions, rheumatism, reproductive problems, depression, chronic fatigue, and impaired cognitive function. These have since been grouped under the name Gulf War Syndrome (GWS). After 224 studies and more than \$200 million in research, the causes remain uncertain. But experts generally agree that these symptoms arose from exposure to any of 33 toxic agents—including pesticides, oil smoke, and nerve agents—present in the area at the time. As one scientist put it, Desert Storm was the "most toxic war in the history of mankind."

Compounding the problem was the fact that the U.S. military had no way to track its soldiers' well-being. The scarcity of data on soldiers' health before and after battle made it impossible to ascertain what triggered their symptoms, and poor records on environmental conditions and troop movements during the war have impeded attempts to determine what areas, and what divisions, may have been affected by specific toxins. As a result, scientists and physicians have had difficulty treating veterans for precisely what ails them. And, in the absence of sufficient empirical evidence, sick vets have a hard time claiming service-related medical benefits.

One would hope the health lessons from the first Gulf war would have made their way into the military planning for this one. After all, the current war in Iraq may well turn out to be more dangerous than the last. Already the ground war has been longer—there were only four days of ground fighting in Desert Storm—and more intense. "We're already seeing more battlefield trauma," notes GWS expert Lea Steele, an epidemiologist at the Kansas Health Institute. Unfortunately, when it comes to protecting American soldiers' health, the second Gulf war looks a lot like the first.

IF THERE IS one message the Pentagon has drummed into the ears of the American public, it's that *this time* the military is ready. "We have learned our lessons," Brigadier General Stephen Reeves, head of the U.S. military's chemical and biological defense program, told a reporter in January in reference to the Pentagon's strategy for preventing another round of GWS-type chaos. "We have applied the lessons of Desert Storm." Anna Johnson-Winegar, deputy assistant to the defense secretary for chemical and biological defense, added, "I can tell you without equivocation that this department has made the protection of our men and women one

of its very highest priorities." As *The Washington Post* reported in January, two months before the fighting began, "[T]he U.S. military is engaged in a massive effort to prevent the reappearance of Gulf War Syndrome."

In fairness, the Department of Defense (DOD) has made some improvements in the way it monitors the health of its soldiers. The military is using new tools to identify toxins and measure levels of exposure in Iraq as well as enhanced technology to mitigate their effects. Military personnel are collecting air, water, and soil samples that, together with data from the now-ubiquitous Global Positioning System (which was not generally available during Desert Storm), can later be used to identify troops who have been exposed to chemical or biological contaminants.

But these advances are eclipsed by the many appalling oversights in the DOD's health-protection strategy. The most egregious lapse has been the simplest: the failure to provide soldiers with rudimentary medical evaluations prior to entering battle. Such tests are vital not only to determine if a soldier is fit for war but also to provide before and after pictures of a soldier's health. The lack of adequate medical data is precisely what has frustrated attempts to link GWS to wartime exposures in Desert Storm and to treat veterans appropriately. Which is why the Clinton administration passed a law in 1997 requiring "predeployment medical examinations and post-deployment medical examinations (including an assessment of mental health and the drawing of blood samples)" for all soldiers sent into battle overseas. These basic procedures impart a wealth of information to doctors and researchers investigating post-combat disorders. Blood tests, for example, can show traces of chemical toxins or infectious agents that were present on the battlefield. Mental health exams can detect cognitive deficiencies, which are common to GWS, or posttraumatic stress disorders. These records in turn help physicians isolate the causes of postwar ailments and guide treatment regimes.

Unfortunately, the Pentagon has nakedly ignored the congressional mandate. In place of hands-on physical and mental evaluations, the DOD is giving out cursory health questionnaires before and after deployment that provide only a rough sketch of a soldier's medical condition. Soldiers are asked to rank their own health on a five-tier scale from "Excellent" to "Poor," a relatively unscientific measure. All the remaining questions are yes/no—"Are you pregnant? (FEMALES ONLY)"; "Do you have any medical or dental problems?"; "During the past year, have you sought counseling or care for your mental health?"—which won't help at all in analyzing sol-

diers' specific symptoms after the war. What's more, military sources say, respondents frequently fill out the questionnaires incorrectly. Ten percent, for example, fail to indicate their sex, and one in three forms are handed back incomplete. "[L]ittle worthwhile data will be forthcoming from the forms currently used for pre- and post-deployment health assessment," noted Johns Hopkins epidemiologist Manning Feinleib, who was director of the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in recent testimony before Congress.

But, even if the forms were more comprehensive, they would still hardly substitute for an actual medical exam, which would rule out preexisting disorders and help doctors determine which postwar illnesses are combat-related. For example, Lou Gehrig's disease, a degenerative nerve disorder, is twice as common among veterans of Desert Storm as among the rest of the military, which some researchers blame

on their low-level exposure to nerve agents in Iraq. Similarly, many veterans of the first Gulf war suffer from severe upper-respiratory problems that could have been caused by exposure to smoke from the roughly 600 oil-well fires ignited by retreating Iraqi brigades. But, without medical data about the soldiers' prewar health and their encounters during the war, it is harder both to diagnose these disorders and to tie them to service in the Gulf.

Finally, instead of drawing blood from troops before and after they are deployed, as the 1997 law required, the Pentagon is relying on serum samples used for HIV testing, which are taken annually but are of limited clinical value for two reasons. First, certain tests for exposure require whole blood as opposed to serum, especially those that look at the sub-

ject's DNA for any chromosomal damage caused by chemical or radiological agents. Second, chemical traces generally vanish from the blood within a few months of exposure. Because of this, samples should be taken immediately before service, to establish a baseline, and immediately after, to maximize the chance of detecting toxins encountered during combat. But the Pentagon's annual serum samples are not coordinated with soldiers' deployment dates, and their post-combat sample will likely be taken months after they return, when the chances of detecting toxins will have decreased substantially.

The upshot is that, if symptoms of GWS recur after this war or if a new syndrome appears, veterans and the doctors who treat them will face the same obstacles that plagued them in the past. Without up-to-date blood samples and baseline medical records, researchers will again be unable to



Is the U.S. military doing enough to protect its soldiers?

locate the source of these ailments. And, because different illnesses can cause similar symptoms, physicians will be forced to treat the symptoms rather than the underlying disease, as has been the case with veterans of Desert Storm. Depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, for example, are associated with service in many wars. But their symptoms, including memory loss and fatigue, can mimic neurological disorders common among Gulf war veterans who were exposed to sarin gas in Iraq. Each requires different treatment, but the lack of proper prewar and wartime tracking obscures the root causes. "We're treating the symptoms without understanding what the underlying cause of the symptoms might be," explains Steven Hunt, director of the Gulf War Veterans' Clinic in Seattle.

This scarcity of medical data will also hurt veterans' chances of collecting disability. After Desert Storm, thousands of vets were denied compensation by the Department of Veterans Affairs because they lacked medical records. Legally, if veterans cannot demonstrate that their ailments were caused by the war, their claims can be denied. "Because they have not collected the baseline data, the post-deployment data will be almost meaningless," notes Stephen Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center. "It means veterans are going to get screwed because, in order for a veteran to receive care and compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, they have to prove that their illness or injury is connected to the service in which they are claiming it happened." This hardly amounts to the "comprehensive system to provide overall protection from chemical and biological agents," be they unconventional or environmental, that the Pentagon has boasted about. And it's far from what the doctor—or Congress—ordered. ■

Beijing Dispatch Sudden Impact

BY JASPER BECKER

IN THE SIX months since North Korea began publicly threatening to build nuclear weapons, two of its largest trading partners—China and South Korea—have largely buried their heads in the sand. When Kim Jong Il admitted last fall that North Korea was developing highly enriched uranium, a violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework with the United States, South Korean leaders were not discouraged from pursuing then-President Kim Dae Jung's "sunshine policy" of engagement. At the end of this winter, North Korea threatened to unleash a war and test-fired missiles into the Sea of Japan; China complacently repeated that the problem was one for the United States to solve.

But, in recent weeks, China and South Korea increas-

ingly have switched course and have begun supporting Washington's tougher line on North Korea. In fact, for the first time since the Bush administration came into office, a workable North Korea policy is taking shape. But this newfound regional coherence isn't due to the Bush administration's actions in Northeast Asia. It is a dividend from the war in Iraq.

BEFORE LATE FEBRUARY, China and South Korea kept silent on, or even opposed, U.S. efforts to deal with North Korea. The Bush administration favored multilateral negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear program involving all the powers in the region. But China spurned this effort, insisting that the only solution lay in acceding to Pyongyang's demands for direct bilateral negotiations with Washington. When pressed to help defuse the North Korea crisis, Chinese officials gave only vague assurances that they were somehow assisting the United States behind the scenes. For his part, South Korea's new president, Roh Moo Hyun, also supported Pyongyang's position on bilateral talks versus multilateral talks. Some in Roh's entourage even suggested that the United States was a greater threat to world peace.

But, since late February, while the media has focused elsewhere, the Bush administration has leveraged its Iraq policy to break the diplomatic impasse in Northeast Asia. In late February, say diplomatic sources in Beijing, Secretary of State Colin Powell told China's new leader, Hu Jintao, that many hawks in Washington believe the only solution to North Korea is regime change—if necessary, by military means. Short of that, he warned that the United States might undertake a preemptive strike against Yongbyon, a nuclear reactor capable of making weapons-grade plutonium, to prevent North Korea from building nuclear weapons.

In Beijing's mind, the Iraq war shows Powell wasn't bluffing. Diplomats in Beijing say China now believes it has only a brief window to prevent an Iraq-like war from exploding near its borders and thus has drawn closer to the U.S. position. In a recent article in Chinese-language *World Affairs* magazine, Zhang Liangui, a scholar close to the leadership in Beijing, wrote, "If North Korea obtains nuclear weapons, the United States would destroy... the Kim Jong Il regime."

This new belief in Washington's willingness to launch preemptive action against North Korea has led China to move quickly. As Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said in early April, China—in an about-face—is now making a substantial effort to press North Korea to accept multilateral talks and to restrain its provocations. Indeed, diplomatic sources in Beijing say that, after Powell's meeting with Hu, the Chinese sent a high-ranking delegation to Pyongyang to pressure Kim.

And, in sharp contrast to Beijing's previous vague assurances, China has put concrete pressure on the North to come to the bargaining table. In late February, China tried to teach

Jasper Becker is a journalist in Beijing and author of THE CHINESE.

Where We Stand

THE AFT ON CRITICAL ISSUES

20 years after "A Nation At Risk"

HIGH STANDARDS NEED SUPPORT

Twenty years ago this month, a controversial report titled *A Nation at Risk* challenged our country to improve its public education system. The report sparked the standards and reform movements, and with them, the expectation that all students would benefit.

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The resulting accomplishments are tangible and promising. Many cities have seen district-wide gains in student achievement. High school students are taking more challenging courses, and more students are going to—and completing—college. Yet, much work remains.

Too often, the least qualified teachers are assigned to classrooms with the greatest needs. In some states, standards and assessments are divorced from the curriculum. And too many classrooms are overcrowded, and lack the textbooks, technology, or other learning tools necessary to provide a high quality education.

Indeed, our progress toward what *A Nation at Risk* identified as the "twin goals of equity and high quality schooling"—a principle at the core of our national being—has been uneven, at best. Most high-poverty schools still get less funding (\$966 less, on average) than schools with more economically advantaged students.



It isn't only about funding: the substance of reform is vitally important. But the components, like good tests and better-trained teachers, must be paid for. Such focused and prudent support for schools can make all the difference, as teachers like Richard Hathaway, a 3rd grade teacher in the ABC Unified School District near Los Angeles, can tell you.

Hathaway's low-income school has implemented an intensive reading program, with academic specialists and extra support for struggling students. "We're getting great results," says Hathaway. "Reading scores were up nearly 30 percent last year."

These efforts, and his district's move to equalize funding for its schools, demonstrate what standards-based reform was meant to do: set high standards for all students, enabling even our poorest students to achieve at the highest levels.

Our progress toward the "twin goals of equity and high quality schooling" has been uneven, at best.

Although progress has been slower than we want, a framework for achievement is in place, and we are moving forward. Schools have shown steady improvement when targeted resources are wisely spent. In this time of spiraling deficits, we must not move backward. Giving all students an equal chance for school success will return benefits many times over.

Sandra Feldman, President,
American Federation of Teachers



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the North a lesson by temporarily closing a pipeline from the Daqing oil fields, which are a vital source of energy for the North. In so doing, China demonstrated that it could cut off the 500,000 tons of oil it sends to Pyongyang each year, choking North Korea's already sputtering economy.

Most important, China has lifted its objections to a meeting of the U.N. Security Council to discuss Pyongyang's nuclear program, a discussion that could lead to further economic sanctions against Pyongyang. Though China has continued to publicly oppose sanctions, even allowing a meeting to take place is a huge step for Beijing, which had never previously acceded to sanctions against the North—or against any other country. In so doing, Beijing may be signaling that it will accept sanctions against the North in the future.

According to diplomats in Beijing, China has even begun considering how to push Kim Jong Il from power. Diplomats say some Chinese officials have privately started arguing that it would be better for Beijing to undertake actions that help remove Kim and install a new government in the North committed to economic reform and regional stability, which would benefit China. Some also feel it would be better for China, rather than the United States, to oust Kim so as not to extend U.S. influence in China's backyard.

A similar turnabout is taking place in South Korea. Roh Moo Hyun now supports the U.S. rather than the North Korean position on handling the crisis, calling for Pyongyang to engage in multilateral negotiations with China, the United States, South Korea, Russia, and Japan. South Korea's leader has also recently heaped praise on the U.S.–South Korea alliance. He has even sent noncombat troops to support the U.S.-led war effort in Iraq, infuriating North Korea, which has voiced strong support for Baghdad.

BECAUSE BOTH CHINA and South Korea have changed their stances, a coherent Pyongyang policy is finally developing. North Korea publicly remains defiant in the face of the growing diplomatic alliance. Kim Jong Il's regime says any sanctions will amount to a declaration of war and vows to resist all demands to disarm.

Ultimately, however, cooperation among all the powers in Northeast Asia may lead to the kind of breakthrough needed to prevent North Korea, which reportedly could build six nuclear weapons by next year, from continuing down the nuclear path. According to Bush administration sources, this week the United States will formally present a "four plus two" multilateral negotiating format for dealing with North Korea, involving China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea—and backed by all four. This multilateral format will put the United States in a stronger position to demand that any deal with Pyongyang include a serious and effective weapons-inspection regime and to prevent other countries in the region from cheating on any agreement made with the North. A deal restraining Pyongyang's nuclear ambition is hardly guaranteed, of course. But, while the media focuses on how the Iraq war could impact the Middle East, the war's first political aftershock is being felt much farther away—in icy Northeast Asia. ■

Franklin Graham v. Iraq. Bible Brigade

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

THE REVEREND Franklin Graham has long been something of a thrill seeker. In his quarter-century as head of the Christian relief agency Samaritan's Purse, the eldest son of the legendary Billy Graham (and heir to his evangelical empire) has earned international respect for supplying food, water, shelter, and medical care to regions where other angels fear to tread. Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, southern Sudan—the more stricken and war torn the area, the greater the opportunity to help, reasons Graham, who delights in personally piloting the group's small planes through airspace prone to artillery attacks and sniper fire. The personal risk only increases the appeal for the Harley-riding, machine-gun-collecting reverend: "War satisfies my need for danger," he once boasted to *GQ*.

Now, the 50-year-old Graham is preparing his organization for perhaps its biggest challenge ever: bringing relief to the freshly liberated populace of Iraq. Samaritan's Purse workers are amassing in Jordan, waiting to cross the border the moment U.S. bombs stop falling. It is a risky endeavor: Long after the U.S. military declares victory, pockets of Iraqi resistance and general chaos within the country could prove hazardous even to veteran volunteers. But the graver danger may be the one Graham's workers pose to U.S. policy in the Middle East—specifically, their potential to convince the Arab world that Operation Iraqi Freedom was, in fact, the opening salvo in a modern crusade against Islam.

Like many faith-based relief agencies, Samaritan's Purse mixes its humanitarian aid with a liberal dose of proselytizing. Unlike the leaders of other organizations, however, Graham has long been an outspoken critic of Islam, the official religion of some 97 percent of Iraqis. And, since the attacks of September 11, Graham's harsh remarks against Islam—including his November 2001 assertion on "NBC Nightly News" that it is "a very evil and wicked religion"—have earned the reverend a reputation as one of this country's leading purveyors of anti-Islamic bigotry. Already, news of Graham's intention to extend his aid ministry into Iraq has set off alarm bells among Muslim groups both at home and abroad. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has loudly denounced Graham's mission as an attempt to take advantage of a desperate, vulnerable people, with CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper predicting to the Web publication *Beliefnet*, "If it becomes generally known it's going to be a public relations disaster for the Bush administration." The publisher of the British Muslim magazine *Q-News* wrote of Graham's plan in *The Guardian*, "For the few remaining Muslims who doubted the crusading nature of

the coalition forces, the final blow came last week."

Under the circumstances, the White House might be well-served to ask that Graham sit this particular dance out. Samaritan's Purse, however, has said that thus far it has received no such request nor even heard any concerns raised by the administration, despite being in daily contact with American officials working in Jordan. Considering Graham's ties to both the Bushies and the Republican Senate leadership—not to mention the president's obsession with keeping his evangelical base happy—that is hardly a surprise.

WHEN CONFRONTED WITH critics' concerns about their mission in Iraq, representatives of Samaritan's Purse seem offended that anyone would question their motives—even as their responses send contradictory and often disquieting messages. Ken Isaacs, the group's international director of projects, told Newhouse News Service in March, "We do not deny the name of Christ. We believe in sharing him in deed and word. We'll be who we are." In a March 26 *Beliefnet* interview, Graham noted, "We realize we're in an Arab country and we just can't go out and preach." But he added that "I believe as we work, God will always give us opportunities to tell others about his Son. . . . We are there to reach out to love them and to save them, and as a Christian I do this in the name of Jesus Christ."

Indeed, the history of Samaritan's Purse suggests that, when it comes to spreading the Good News, Graham and Co. often cannot help themselves. In 2001, for instance, Samaritan's Purse received a USAID grant to help with the reconstruction of El Salvador following a devastating earthquake. The organization soon came under fire, however, when *The New York Times* reported that agency volunteers were holding half-hour prayer services before each construction seminar. As the group's El Salvador director explained, "We are first a Christian organization and second an aid organization. We can't really separate the two. We really believe Jesus Christ told us to do relief work." Since no government money had been used to fund the actual religious meetings, Samaritan's Purse was ruled not to have technically violated government guidelines; USAID officials, however, directed the group to ensure a clearer separation between its ministry and its relief work in the future. Similarly, Samaritan's Purse sparked controversy in both Great Britain and Canada last December when it was reported that the group was soliciting donations for its "Operation

Christmas Child" (which encourages school children to donate gifts to needy children overseas) without making it clear that Christian literature would be included with many of the packages.

Of greatest relevance to the recent debate, however, was Graham's clash with General Norman Schwarzkopf during the first Gulf war. As part of a project termed "Operation Desert Save," Graham arranged for the shipment of tens of thousands of Arabic-language New Testaments to the troops in Saudi Arabia to be passed along to the locals. The project was in direct violation of Saudi law and flew in the face of an understanding between the U.S. and Saudi governments to eschew proselytizing. As Graham later recalled to *Newsday*, Schwarzkopf had a chaplain from his office phone the reverend to complain about the diplomatic difficulties he was causing. Graham's response: "Sir, I understand that, and I appreciate that,

but I'm also under orders, and that's from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Schwarzkopf went on to publicly slap Graham and Samaritan's Purse in a section of his 1993 autobiography—a scolding the reverend proudly points to as a symbol of his willingness to fight the good fight, no matter how unpopular.

In fact, Graham, like many evangelical leaders, regards criticism of his proselytizing and aggressive sectarianism as a badge of honor. His 2002 book, *The Name*, boasts of the various storms provoked by his insistence on invoking Jesus' name at politically sensitive times, such as during President Bush's 2001 inaugural or the prayer service following the 1999 Columbine massacre; there, Graham informed the crowd that only those willing to "ask God for his forgiveness and to receive his

son, Jesus Christ, by faith into our hearts and into our lives" were eligible for eternity in heaven.

IN MANY CASES, the good that Samaritan's Purse achieves is arguably worth the risk of alienating some people's religious sensibilities. (The organization has, after all, been ranked the most efficient religious charity for three years running by *Smart Money* magazine.) But Graham's long-standing, increasingly vehement antipathy toward Islam suggests he is far too loose a cannon to unleash in an environment as politically volatile as postwar Iraq. While Graham's smear of Islam as "evil" and "wicked" prompted the fiercest firestorm, it was neither his first nor final remark along these lines. In the fall of 2000, for instance, Graham told a Kentucky journalist that "the Arabs will not be



Franklin Graham's workers are amassing in Jordan, waiting to cross the border the moment U.S. bombs stop falling.

happy until every Jew is dead." More recently, in *The Name*, Graham writes extensively about the inherently violent nature of Islam, calls Christianity and Islam "as different as lightness and darkness," and asserts that the two religions are locked in an eternal struggle that will only end with the triumphant return of Christ. On his book tour last August, Graham warned Fox News that Islam poses "a greater threat than anyone's willing to speak." And, this February, he told the *Sunday Times* of London, "I don't wish evil on any Muslim, but their God is not my God. The true God is the God of the Bible, not the Koran." Even other faith-based organizations and aid groups have expressed concerns that the presence of Graham and his group in postwar Iraq could ultimately make life harder for everyone from nonsectarian aid workers to the country's Christian minority to other evangelicals. As Donna Derr, an official with the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox aid group Church World Service, told *Beliefnet* in March, "I would hate to see the tenuous balance that has been created [between the Christian and Muslim communities] made unbalanced by the entry into Iraq by people who may have less sensitivity." Last September, for instance, Reverend Jerry Falwell's characterization of Mohammad as "a terrorist" touched off a riot in Solapur, India, that left eight people dead and 90 injured. Who knows what might have happened if his missionaries had been on the ground at the time.

Despite all this, the Bush administration appears unwilling to ask Graham to tread lightly—or not at all—in Iraq. In part, this may be the result of domestic political concerns: Karl Rove would likely rather risk an international holy war than a drop in Bush's support among Christian conservatives. But Graham's personal ties to Republican leaders surely impact the situation as well. The Bush and Graham clans are longtime friends, and George W. loves to tell the story of how Billy Graham helped lead him to Jesus. Franklin, too, is fast carving out his own spot among the party players. He delivered the benediction at the Republican National Conventions in both 1996 and 2000, as well as the invocation at George W.'s inauguration. Later in 2001, Graham was one of a dozen religious leaders invited to the Pentagon by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to discuss the moral implications of the war on terrorism. Graham has also become fast friends with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who has traveled to Sudan with Samaritan's Purse a number of times to deliver medical care. So it seems unlikely that Senate Republicans will be leading the charge to have Bush rein Graham in anytime soon.

With the war's end, rebuilding America's image in the Arab world may well prove even more complicated than rebuilding Iraq. The last thing a postwar Middle East needs is an uncontrollable Reverend Graham dashing around trying to save the heathen hordes. Indeed, at this point, Graham's ugly disquisitions on the nature of Islam have made him so radioactive that, even if he doesn't utter one word about Jesus while in Iraq, his mere presence in the region could be considered a provocation. None of which is to suggest that Graham is operating with anything but the best of intentions. But, like the road to hell, the road to holy war is paved with good intentions. ■

Who shouldn't run Iraq. Minority Rule

BY MARTIN PERETZ

THE WAR IN Iraq has come and—barely three weeks later—already seems about to be gone. Of course, this is not the end of the Iraqi venture. Indeed, if history teaches us anything about modern Mesopotamia, it is that this venture will only get harder. Iraq frustrates those who attempt to remake it. The British tried, for many years, after they planted the Union Jack over Baghdad on March 11, 1917. That victory did not come to pass until nearly 30,000 British troops had been killed, with a roughly equal number of Ottoman soldiers slain on the same battlefields. The combat for what was not yet called Iraq was one of those vast and legendary death-happenings of World War I, and it included, besides, a march of 13,000 British prisoners of war from Kut all the way to Turkey, an augury of what was to befall American troops at Bataan, which is to say, an augury of endless death en route.

One of the blessings of the present war is that military and civilian casualties seem to have been kept to contextually very low numbers; this is because the U.S. Armed Forces and their British compatriots have disciplined themselves, like the Israelis, to an exacting code of purity of arms. Indeed, American, British, and Israeli troops are the only armies technologically equipped to truly put such a code into effect. They are the only militaries that really invested in conscientiously scrupulous ordnance. (This is also why a high-tech American soldiery couldn't possibly be synchronized with the ragtag armies that the Security Council might have cobbled together if it had been able to muster the political will.)

This, however, tells us nothing about the future of Iraq. Humane rules in warfare do not translate into practical state-building, even less into effective nation-building. Alas, Iraq is one of those cartographical creations bound by straight lines—always a bad omen—and incorporating muddled populations. Among these are Sunni Arabs, who constituted less than 20 percent of the population when the borders were laid down. Nonetheless, 82 years ago, Miss Gertrude Bell, then-Oriental secretary to the civil commissioner in Baghdad, imported from the desert a Sunni descendant of the prophet to whose father his majesty's government owed a wartime debt. She tried first to install the Emir Faisal as king of Damascus in Syria (where there was a Sunni majority), but the French ruined her plans by sending Arab mobs into the city center to riot. So Bell had him crowned in Baghdad instead, and he proceeded to rule, brutally but incompetently, over the Shia, the Kurds, the Assyrians (now just about all gone, either murdered or exiled), and the Jews, who for centuries—until the early '40s—constituted a

plurality in Baghdad. The Iraqi branch of the Hashemite family ruled there under British and (latterly) U.S. patronage until 1958, when a "republican" revolt shed so much blood that the streets of the old city were red for days.

Saddam Hussein did not declare himself president until 1979. But the interregnum was not even a pause between the cruel routines of Iraqi politics. First Nasserism, then Baathism (part fascist, part Stalinist) defined the country's politics and social relations, perpetuating what by then were very old habits of barbarism and tyranny. The interethnic and intersectoral conflicts that have defined our grasp of the internal elements of this war were then, too, the essence of Iraqi policy. And, always the minority, Sunnis held the upper hand.

But the Baath Sunnis of Iraq were not millenarians. They were relatively secular and also clients of the Soviets as long as the Soviets existed, like the Syrian Baathists of the Assad clan and the Nasserites before them in Egypt. It is true that, in all these countries, there was a Muslim Brotherhood of Sunni fanatics, whose fortunes would ebb and flow. But the regimes did make their lives difficult, even treacherous, and then, in moments of crisis, the dictator would suddenly tilt the way of the hyper-faithful, as Saddam did in his last days.

Sunni dominance in Iraq has been for decades the axiomatic formula for foreign interlocutors, first the United Kingdom and subsequently the United States. For centuries, there were robust Christian communities in Iraq. No longer. In any case,

the West is now serenely indifferent to the fate of Christians in the Muslim world. The very existence of the Kurds, however, always seemed to imperil the territorial integrity of Iraq, a highly fatuous construct, and the territorial stability of other neighboring countries as well. They were almost everyone's favorite lost cause, but a lost cause nonetheless, gruff figures in a museum of threatened ethnic minorities. The Kurdish hour, however, has finally come. The Shia, by contrast, were no one's favorite cause, lost or otherwise. In the Levant and the Fertile Crescent, the Shia were the downtrodden and disinherited of Islam, despised and derided as fanatics. After the transformation of Iran into a revolutionary Shia state by the ayatollahs, an even more malignant aura was attached to them. In Saudi Arabia, the Shia had always been seen as insidious religious heretics. Now they were thought of as dangerous Persian agents as well. So too, of course, in Iraq, despite the fact that no Shia had risen against Saddam during his disastrous war with Iran.

The political demonization of the Shia among the Saudi elite turned into marching orders for George H.W. Bush and for his partner in power and purse, James Baker. They let Saddam remain standing at the end of the first Gulf war primarily to ensure the continued dominance of the Sunnis in Iraq and not to threaten Sunni dominance in Saudi Arabia. And they turned their backs after the Gulf war on a Shia revolt for which the United States had sounded the trumpets. The fact



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is that the American political and petroleum vocation in the Arab world has always been premised on a partnership with the Sunni elites. This remains the concern of State's professional Arabists, and it shades Colin Powell's views as well. It is a remarkable declaration of political independence by George W.—and perhaps a rite of personal passage—that he seems to grasp that the traditional historical dictum about Sunni domination may actually be banal. There is now a struggle in the administration between the Sunni-firsters, who are large in number and highly placed, and everyone else.

The Sunni-firsters say they want the new Iraq to be kept afloat in the only way that is possible: by the experienced hands of the old Iraq, its seasoned petroleum professionals, its sage judges, its competent administrators, its honest men of the army, even some of its politicians. But what they really intend is to maintain Iraq as a center of Sunni power, which means holding the Kurds and Shia at bay. In a paradoxical way, the Sunnis are the only ones they truly trust. And, in trusting the present Sunni hierarchy, they really trust the Iraqi Baath Party or whatever will remain of it at the war's conclusion.

It is no surprise that the powers at the United Nations who fought to keep Saddam alive are now angling for leverage in the new Iraq. Once again, Jacques Chirac has stated it most clearly: "The political, economic, humanitarian, and administrative reconstruction of Iraq is a matter for the United Nations and for it alone." It is not simply the mercantile interests of the intransigent European countries that animate them. It is also the fact that the Muslim states, mostly Sunni, are long-time players in the U.N. *nomenklatura* and apparatus. The game that they have played is to sidle up to the Europeans, flatter them, make them feel important, even pivotal. But the portent that goes with being France is not unlike the portent of being Saudi Arabia: It is expiring and expiring fast. This is last-ditch politics in very high-flown language.

Old Europe also needs the Muslim states to soothe the rage of the vast Arab migration that has settled in and deeply troubles the Rhineland countries. No social or economic issue can now be discussed in Europe other than with its Muslim salient in mind. Whether they like it or not—and most of them don't—the countries of Western Europe are fast becoming multicultural societies. But they remain highly stratified ones, ethnically and religiously tense. The medium of exchange is not in the coinage of real power but in ancillary matters, in foreign affairs, one buy-off and then another: the fate of Israel, for example, and now Iraq. The European elites will want to keep it that way.

The fact is that, if Iraq is really to make it, it will have to make it as a multicultural society. Otherwise, it will return to ritual and routine bloodletting. Maybe the odds are not good that it will evade this fate. The past, especially a past like the Iraqi past, is always a tendentious mortgage.

Still, to the extent that the Americans who crafted this war are largely the people who will craft the peace—which is to say, craft the arrangements for governing Iraq—the odds become better. It is ironic—isn't it?—that it is the Pentagon from which the boldest and most humane vision of the future Iraq has

come. The State Department, which didn't want the war, is now also resisting the corollaries of victory. As in the months before the war, the issue is being framed domestically and internationally by those who historically have always wanted to rely on the United Nations as a *deus ex machina*. But it is in the interest of the people of Iraq that the United Nations be marginalized in the reorganization of their government. The United Nations made a hash of all the countries where it had reconstructive responsibilities, such as Cambodia and Haiti. The United Nations has never been interested in the internal arrangements of countries and governments. It is not in its mandate.

In fact, the United Nations hasn't performed exceptionally well on what is its mandate: the maintenance of borders, however arbitrary, of existing states. That mandate is why it has never really been able to deal with or have effective policies about enormous human tragedies within established borders. Internal genocide, as in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, or Iraq, simply paralyzes the United Nations. Similarly, the United Nations has never recognized a refugee within national frontiers: The project of starving Biafran babies was always an internal matter for the Nigerians.

The United Nations has administered a corrupt oil-for-food program in Iraq. It ran an incompetent weapons-inspections program, not once but twice. Its sanctions regime was breached even by permanent members of the Security Council. The organization is so fractured by factions, so mesmerized by melodrama, that it is a model of organizational dysfunction. The United Nations is not the world's last hope for anything. At worst, it is a sanctuary for those who do evil. At best, it is an excuse for those afraid to do good. ■

Iran's plans for Iraq. Separate Ways

BY ELI J. LAKE

IN THE FIRST weekend of the war, a little-noticed statement from the State Department promised that the United States still took "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran very seriously." The Middle East hands at Foggy Bottom crafted the phrase after the Iranians accused the United States of firing missiles into Iran's Abadan oil refinery. It turned out the missiles were Iraqi, but State still used the occasion to send Tehran a message: You're not next.

The public statement echoed private communications that had been taking place in recent months in Geneva between the U.S. envoy to the Iraqi opposition, Zalmay Khalilzad, and Iranian diplomats. In these talks, Khalilzad reportedly emphasized

Eli J. Lake is State Department correspondent for United Press International.

to the Iranians that the United States believed they could be valuable assets in the Iraq war. "We kept saying our relations will improve—everyone said this—if you behave," one American official familiar with the State Department's Iran diplomacy said. "The bottom line was things would get better."

But State miscalculated. Three weeks into the war, it's apparent the Iranians have every intention of sabotaging both America's battle plans and its efforts to rebuild Iraq. Iran, in fact, has been welcoming anyone who fought the coalition forces with open arms. Yet, despite Iran's clear actions, the Bush administration has failed to develop a clear response.

IN HIS MEETINGS with the Iranian diplomats, Khalilzad hoped to cement Iran's neutrality in the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Khalilzad wanted to secure promises that Tehran would not flood Iraq with agents to stir up trouble for American troops or open Iran's borders to fleeing Iraqi fighters and other people American forces would want to detain. In exchange for this help, American officials say, Khalilzad promised to include Iranian-backed Iraqi groups in the government that replaces Saddam Hussein and to pursue better relations with Tehran once the campaign with Iraq is over. To demonstrate America's willingness to work with Iranian-supported Iraqi exiles, the United States even offered to train the Badr Brigade, the military wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), an Iranian-based group of Iraqi Shia known for their Islamist sympathies. What's more, American officials invited SCIRI's leaders to Washington last August and then again to an opposition conference organized by the State Department in London in December 2002. At the London conference, SCIRI was allotted a role in planning for a postwar Iraq.

Reaching out to Iran's mullahs on Iraq seemed to some State officials like smart diplomacy, since this approach had produced benefits in the past. After all, the State Department believes Iran has not tried to undermine Hamid Karzai's government in Afghanistan in part because Iranian leaders were invited to the Bonn conference to help advise on the country's reconstruction. Indeed, Tehran has contributed most of the cloth for the uniforms of Afghanistan's nascent American-trained military and has rebuilt more roads in the ravaged country than the United States or the United Nations. According to American officials, last May the Iranians even provided a list of alleged Al Qaeda operatives who had fled from Afghanistan into Iran to the U.S. National Security Council through a third channel. Tehran would eventually expel alleged mid-level Al Qaeda operatives from its soil to three countries—Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Netherlands—thereby assisting in the war on terror.

But State's rosy assumptions about Iran's Iraq plans have proved false. Though there has been considerable pro-U.S. sentiment on the streets of Tehran in recent months, the Iranian government still believes it is at war with the United States and continues to view Washington with considerable mistrust and distaste. Since the Iraq conflict began, Iran's leaders, despite having fought a brutal war with Saddam during the

1980s, have openly condemned the U.S. and British military campaign and any U.S.-led postwar reconstruction of Iraq. On March 30, Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said his government would only respect an Iraq "established under the supervision of the United Nations." Then, in early April, Iranian President Mohammed Khatami told reporters, "Those who launch today their bombs and missiles on Iraq will reap only destruction and hatred from the Iraqi people." And, on April 4, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran's powerful ex-president, warned that any damage to Shia shrines in southern Iraq would result in "more damage . . . inflicted on the White House." Meanwhile, SCIRI leader Ayatollah Mohammed Bakr Al Hakim has threatened to take up arms against American forces should he deem their presence an occupation. Al Hakim, who resides in Iran, announced this week that he plans to return to southern Iraq in the near future.

In addition to lashing out at the United States, the Iranians have taken a series of actions that hinder the Iraq war effort. Far from closing their border to fleeing Iraqi soldiers and irregulars, the Iranians have welcomed them. Fighters from a reputed Al Qaeda offshoot, Ansar Al Islam—an organization highlighted by Colin Powell as evidence of Saddam's links to Osama bin Laden in his February 5 testimony to the United Nations—escaped to Iran after U.S. cruise missiles destroyed their base in northern Iraq 48 hours into the war, though some of the fighters have since returned to Iraq. Among those who escaped was Sa'adoon Mohammed Abdul Latif, an Iraqi intelligence officer better known as Abu Wa'il, who is believed by American intelligence to be an intermediary between bin Laden and Iraq's intelligence ministry. Another militant, Ayub Afghani, an Al Qaeda-trained explosives expert, also allegedly has found safe haven in Iran. "We know they fled into Iran, [and] we have urged the Iranian authorities to hand them over to us. So far, we have yet to receive an answer," one Kurdish official in Iraq with access to intelligence said last week.

Not only has the Iranian government welcomed people leaving the fighting, it also reportedly has sent people into Iraq in an attempt to slow down coalition forces and win influence for Iran once Saddam falls. On March 24, American intelligence sent a report to a number of senior officials detailing minutes from a meeting of Iran's National Security Council in which the Council drew up plans to send paramilitary units into Baghdad, Basra, Karbala, Kirkuk, and Al Najaf after Saddam is toppled. The CIA also discovered last month that Iran's Revolutionary Guard has procured Saudi and Kuwaiti military uniforms, supposedly to give to these paramilitaries to help them confuse coalition forces in Iraq. As one American official with access to the intelligence said, "Watch the Iranians in the next three weeks."

Iran's intransigence has not led the Bush administration to take a more hard-line approach. In an interview last week with the London-based Arabic daily *al-Hayat*, Powell said, "Nobody in the American administration [has] talked about invading Iran. . . . It seems that there is a constant desire by everybody to accuse us of invasion operations. That . . . won't take place." In fact, the administration still has yet to come up with any

coherent Iran policy, as hawks and doves continue battling over how to deal with Tehran. Some hawks argue that the United States should pursue regime change, citing Iran's unwillingness to help the Iraq war effort as further evidence of the need for transformation in Tehran. Some doves contend that there is no organized opposition in Iran capable of overthrowing the government and argue that, given more time and incentives, Iran could be enticed not to meddle in a postwar Iraq. Unfortunately, while the administration seems unable to settle on any clear plan, Iran seems to be pushing ahead with one of its own. ■

Why Syria isn't "next." White Lie

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

WHO'S NEXT? As Saddam Hussein's regime crumbled this week, that was the question being asked by commentators across the globe. And, when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld took to his podium to declare that the United States would hold Syria "accountable" for its weapons shipments to Iraq—a charge backed up by Secretary of State Colin Powell—it seemed the Bush team had finally provided the answer. The ubiquitous General Wesley Clark reported that "many 'policy types' in Washington are now speaking openly of Syria as the next target," while *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman revealed that, having bested Iraqi forces, "a strong faction within the administration wants to go on to Syria."

Actually, there is no such faction. When President Bush insisted in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, that "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," he was said to have cast the international scene in "black-and-white" terms. This was meant as a criticism, a plea for nuance that took issue with the president's decision to place countries like Iran in the black column when they really belonged in the gray one. The more intriguing question, though, has always concerned countries that didn't merit inclusion in the axis of evil, such as Saudi Arabia and Syria, nations that simultaneously clamp down on and sponsor terrorism and to which neither toppling by force nor coddling without condition seem adequate responses. Nevertheless, the Bush team placed the Saudis and the Syrians in the white column and lavished them with praise for a year and a half.

If there was ever a regime that doesn't belong in the white column, it is Syria under Bashar Al Assad. But that does not necessarily mean it belongs in the black column either. As far as U.S. policy goes, there are two Syrias: a good one and a bad

one. First, the good Syria. In the immediate aftermath of September 11, Assad provided the United States with what one administration official describes as a "treasure trove" of intelligence on Al Qaeda activities among Syrian nationals—principal among these Mohammed Haydar Zammar, an Al Qaeda commander living in Germany, and Mamoun Darkazanli, one of the organization's alleged financiers. Assad even sent President Bush a letter proposing that the two countries "establish sound bases of worldwide cooperation . . . to uproot terrorism in all its forms." Before long, Syrian intelligence operatives were meeting with the CIA and passing along warnings replete with details about likely terrorist targets. Even the administration's Syria hawks concede that one such warning, which alerted American policymakers to a plot against American forces in the Gulf, "saved American lives." Against all expectations, Damascus even voted for U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441, the U.S.-backed measure that sent weapons inspectors back into Iraq.

A grateful Bush team has responded with a steady diet of diplomatic carrots and blandishments. It excluded Syria from the axis of evil and barely uttered a peep when Syria was elected to the U.N. Security Council. On the contrary, Powell telephoned Assad to praise his cooperation in the war on terrorism; congressional delegations (and, last April, Powell himself) appeared at the Syrian dictator's palace gate; Vice President Dick Cheney called to chat; the administration kept mum about Syria's ongoing military occupation of Lebanon; and it even authorized the opening of a back channel to Damascus, conducted by members of the Bush père team under the auspices of Houston's aptly named James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy. Not surprisingly, then, when Congress threatened to impose sanctions on Syria last year, the Bush team weighed in against the bill, reasoning, as Powell put it in a letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that "[n]ew sanctions on Syria would place at risk our ability to . . . change Syrian behavior." Employing similar logic, Bush's closest ally, Britain's Tony Blair, feted Assad at Downing Street and even ushered him in to meet the Queen.

It thus came as something of a surprise to many when, in the midst of the war with Iraq, Syria began supplying Saddam with anti-tank weapons, night-vision goggles, and suicide bombers. It shouldn't have. Because, even as the good Syria has been playing nice, the bad Syria has, if anything, gotten worse since the September 11 attacks. Balancing its need to stay out of America's bombsights with its domestic and regional aims, Damascus continues to play host to an alphabet soup of terrorist groups, including leaders from Hamas and Hezbollah, which Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage has branded the "A Team of terrorists." After Hezbollah intensified its cross-border attacks against Israel last spring, Bush demanded that Syria "choose the right side in the war on terror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist organizations." Assad's reply came a week later, with his declaration that "Syria supports the Lebanese national resistance, including Hezbollah." As if to prove the point, the Syrian dictator has brushed aside even the restraints imposed

by his father, Hafez Al Assad, who merely provided a conduit for Iranian arms destined for Lebanese terror camps, and has begun directly supplying Hezbollah with heavy weapons and integrating its units into the Syrian army.

If Syria's support for America's foes was confined to Hezbollah, the administration might still be touting Assad as a partner in the war on terrorism. Alas, the Syrian leader has a soft spot for Saddam, too. Unlike his father, whose enmity toward his Iraqi counterpart dated back decades and culminated in his decision to join the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq in 1991, the younger Assad has developed a full-blown alliance with the Iraqi leader in the three years since he took power. Strapped for cash, keen to prove his credentials to a rabidly anti-American public, and eager to emerge from his father's shadow, Assad reopened the Iraqi-Syrian pipeline in late 2000 and before long was funneling \$1 billion worth of oil out of Iraq each year (in violation of U.N. sanctions); lifting visa, trade, and other border restrictions with Iraq; and even shopping for Saddam on the international arms market. Nor did Powell's 2001 plea to shut down Syria's illicit oil trade with Iraq or successive U.S. *démarches* make the slightest impression on Assad. Instead, the Syrian dictator pledged two weeks ago to "stand beside Baghdad" in its current war with the United States and, for good measure, had his foreign minister, Farouk Al Sharaa, assure the Syrian parliament that "Syria's interest is to see the invaders defeated in Iraq."

Even during the war, Assad's regime has been shipping military equipment across the Iraqi border, which prompted Rumsfeld's rebuke on March 28. Nor did that rebuke come merely from Rumsfeld and his civilian advisers: It was cleared with the White House and reflected, if anything, frustration within the ranks of the U.S. military. That frustration, according to administration officials, stemmed from Syrian shipments of Russian-made Kornet anti-tank weapons and platoons of suicide bombers carrying Syrian passports. The traffic has continued despite repeated American protests and even a visit to Damascus by Assistant Secretary of State William Burns. The traffic has flowed in the other direction, too: As their regime collapsed around them this week, many of Saddam's lieutenants piled into caravans and scrambled to safety in Damascus.

SO WILL SYRIA finally, as Rumsfeld insists, be held "accountable"? The Syrian regime seems to hope so. Over the past few weeks, a parade of its officials has fanned out on the Arab world's airwaves to predict, as Assad did two weeks ago, that Damascus will be Washington's "next target." He's not likely to get his way. "Pretending he's next, particularly after Saddam is gone, makes [Assad] look like a leader," says one Pentagon official. "But he's not even on the list."

Nor has the dictator's wartime conduct budged the administration's Syriaphiles from their attachment to Assad. At the State Department, where Burns and his deputy, David Satterfield, have been touting Assad as an Arab Gorbachev ever since September 11, opposition to sanctioning his regime still

runs deep. As in Iraq, State Department officials have refused to meet with prominent Lebanese and Syrian opposition leaders and, in recent weeks, even prevented their counterparts at the Pentagon from doing so. The CIA's George Tenet along with Bush I veterans, such as former Secretary of State James Baker and former Ambassador to Syria Edward Djerejian, have also continued pushing the Bush team in the direction of diplomatic accommodation. As summarized by a State Department official who hears it daily, their argument is that, however imperfect he may be, Assad has provided invaluable assistance in the war against Al Qaeda, and the White House will need to call on him if it intends to revive the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians. President Bush has also rung up a debt to Prime Minister Blair for his wartime support, and the British have been pushing the Bush team to make amends with Syria. Hence, when asked last week whether Rumsfeld's comments portend a less forgiving policy toward Damascus, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw snapped, "We would have nothing whatever to do with an approach like that."

But the debate over who comes after Saddam again ignores the gray. America's diplomatic toolbox, after all, contains numerous options short of war, and it is exactly these options that are under consideration by officials less enamored of Assad. They run the diplomatic gamut, from pressing Damascus more forcefully—through diplomatic pressure and public denunciations—to oust the terror groups that call Syria home to elevating Syria's occupation of Lebanon in the hierarchy of U.S. policy concerns. That last option holds particular appeal for officials in the White House and at the Pentagon, who recall with disgust the *quid pro quo* that the elder Bush hammered out with the elder Assad in 1990. Under the terms of that agreement, the United States—in return for Syria's support for the Gulf war—agreed to turn a blind eye to its occupation of Lebanon. Washington does so to this day, and the mere suggestion of doing otherwise makes officials at Foggy Bottom apoplectic. Indeed, if policymakers at the Defense Department continue to flirt with speaking out about the occupation of Lebanon, the issue could easily become yet another flashpoint between the two agencies.

Unless, of course, the White House settles the matter first. Informed of Rumsfeld's denunciation of Syria, President Bush reportedly gave a monosyllabic response: "Good." But it would be even better if Bush made the denunciation himself. And better still if he did so for reasons that went beyond pique over Syria's wartime conduct. Here, after all, is a regime that, like Saddam's, tortures its own citizens, invades its neighbors, and supports terrorism abroad. True, it doesn't possess as many deadly weapons as its neighbor to the east. But, then, no one is advocating war with Syria. What Pentagon and White House officials are advocating is merely skepticism regarding the fantasy that the war on terrorism has transformed a long-time foe into a newfound friend. Candor on that point hardly requires toppling the regime in Damascus. It just means a few less love letters to Bashar Al Assad. ■

Northern Iraq Dispatch Land's End

BY ELIZABETH RUBIN

SATURDAY: A friend from Kurdsat, the TV station of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which rules this part of northern Iraq, called yesterday to say his friends in Kalar, at the southeastern tip of northern Iraq, will launch a big offensive today against the Iraqi army's 5th Corps. So we speed from Sulaymaniya through the mountains and around the lake at Darbandi Khan, down to the rolling plains and palm trees around Kalar. But the front is so quiet that we just sit and watch street fighting in Baghdad, being broadcast by Fox News on Kurdsat television, with the commander in charge, Mola Bakhtiyar.

He's an old *peshmerga*, and he just threw away his jacket and tie and put on his *peshmerga* clothes two weeks ago. He's from Khaneqin, like the older men sitting in a circle around him—all civilians, a lawyer, an engineer, a mechanic—who've been summoned to take back their hometown and help the Americans with the human and natural terrain. Bakhtiyar was a rebel all his life and, in the 1970s, had to flee Khaneqin lest he be executed as a member of the secret underground. I ask him how his family was affected by Saddam Hussein's Arabization program. "The Arabization," he says, "began in the seventh century. The first battle between the Arab Muslim invaders and the Kurds and Persians happened twenty kilometers away from here in Halwan. They called it the Qadisha [sacred] Battle, and it was led by Omar bin Khattab. ... Since that battle, there hasn't been a single Arab ruler who hasn't tried to extend the Arabization program." He looks around the room and asks the men their names. One is Qais, another Hidayat, another Azad, another Ayub. All Arabic names. "Why?" he asks. "Because, when we were occupied by the mullahs and religious teachers, whoever's name was not mentioned by the prophets were considered sinners. So our fathers gave us Arab names." As for Khaneqin, he says, "We have two hundred eighty-six villages in Khaneqin. All ... [names] changed to Arabic." Bakhtiyar's on a roll now, and he goes on, "If you change a history, a society, a human being, their tradition, culture, songs, and the name of their children, you must know how that human being will be deprived of his humanity and what hatred he will have." His own family was expelled in 1975 after a Kurdish revolution was crushed; they settled in Faluja, in the deserts west of Baghdad. For the coming battle (if there ever is one), Bakhtiyar has collected 1,000 *peshmerga* from Khaneqin. Every hour, he says, he's expecting the call. As for the Arabs of Khaneqin, some, he says, will be respected. The others? Kicked out. As we're leav-

ing, we wave hello to the American Special Forces camped out in Bakhtiyar's compound.

SUNDAY: A friend calls from Irbil. The Americans and the *peshmerga* are advancing toward Mosul, the third-largest town in Iraq, heavily endowed with Baathists. It's a long drive, and, on the way, we get the bad news. A U.S. plane has accidentally bombed a convoy of *peshmerga*, American Special Forces, BBC reporters, and Wajih Barzani, the brother of Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which rules the other half of northern Iraq.

A few hours later, we're between Mosul and Kirkuk. The young, sunburned *peshmerga* commander, Maghdid Herki, says 18 men died instantly in the friendly fire incident. Suddenly, he yells orders to one of his *peshmerga*. "Tell Mister Tom [an American with them] that this guy is an officer's assistant. Tell the Americans to take out their map, and he will give them a lot of good information about the Iraqi troops." The man in question is a skinny, wrinkled Iraqi army soldier in a dark-green jumpsuit and tan, peeling pilgrim loafers, hardly the shoes for a fighter. Maghdid leads the Iraqi soldier to a cluster of American Special Forces in Humvees. There's a small huddle over the maps, with the American in charge.

Maghdid taunts the Iraqi: "Your informations are completely uninteresting to me. If I knew they were so simple, I wouldn't have taken you here. You say you're an officer's assistant, and you can't even read maps." The Iraqi replies, "My profession wasn't maps." Maghdid says, "You were in the Iraqi army, and you don't even know the names around here." He's in a softhearted mood, though, and he says, "I don't want to scare you. I just need the truth. You are our brothers. We respect you. You'll go back to your families. Inshallah."

The scrawny, underfed Iraqi tells me, "My name is Amer Mizher Rai from Nasiriya. I was in our stronghold. There was such intensive bombardment by cluster bombs, we couldn't move right or left." He says that, as the *peshmerga* advanced on them, they shouted, "Surrender yourselves. The Americans won't harm you."

Amer's tale is confusing. He says he was in the army for 24 years. Yet he doesn't know maps? Well, he says, changing his story, his profession was as a taxi driver, and he'd escaped from the army. There was an amnesty by "Said Rais," he says, misspeaking. My translator laughs, "You mean Saddam."

But his confusion is hardly surprising. He was brought up to lie about his real feelings to survive in Saddam's world. Then he was captured by Americans and Kurds who say they're friends—but how can Amer trust them? Amer clearly isn't ready just yet to relax, to laugh, or to slight Saddam. He

Elizabeth Rubin is covering the war in Iraq for THE NEW REPUBLIC.

turns to my translator and says, "Are you sure Saddam won't remain in power?" Maghdid returns, shouting, "Time to go." Amer is whisked away in a taxi to a holding camp, where he's given biscuits, cigarettes, water, clean clothes, and 200 Iraqi dinars, enough to buy a pair of pants.

MONDAY: In the morning, we visit American Special Forces north of Mosul. One of them, a marathon runner, jokes that he has called in \$1 billion per day of explosives on the Iraqis. Well, he says, that's an exaggeration—but, he adds offhandedly, "We've dropped one hundred dumb bombs a day on them for fourteen days, and each one costs twenty thousand dollars." A mortar round flies in somewhere, and one of the Americans says, "All right, we got targets." Everyone's a little jumpy. The *peshmerga* are neck-deep in coffin-shaped foxholes.

We go to a field outside of Dibaga, where we sit with an exhausted *peshmerga*. He'd set off with seven other men at 4 a.m. the previous morning to take Dibaga. They thought it was abandoned. As they reached the ridge, the Iraqis fired back. "It was so close. We were firing into each other's faces. The Iraqis called in more tanks. We pulled back and were about to be totally defeated and demoralized until more *peshmerga* arrived." The Iraqis split across the field, and he chased after them, firing madly. "If you go now into the farmland, you'll see their dead bodies," he says, neither proudly nor remorsefully.

TUESDAY: Baghdad is almost in American hands. Basra is under British control. Umm Qasr is already under reconstruction. Here along the northern front, we're experiencing a "mini me" war, a tiny replica of the big show. Still, we drive out to see the Americans again in their field above a bridge they have yet to secure—not because they can't but because Central Command hasn't ordered them to. It's the Turkish problem. The Turks are insisting no Kurdish troops go to Mosul or Kirkuk, and this bridge is needed to get to these cities. So U.S. planes keep pounding the recalcitrant Iraqi 5th Corps, stationed around Mosul, which keeps hitting the *peshmerga* and the Americans each morning with artillery. But, today, it's a wet, gloomy morning, and the only shells are fat rain pellets. "Welcome to the northern front. Ten soldiers and two journalists," laughs one of the Americans. One American is getting artistic with his camouflaging, sculpting a robust naked woman on the front end of his jeep.

For five days now, the Iraqis have held this bridge. One Kurdish commander tells the Americans, "Please don't leave us alone like yesterday because we cannot resist the Iraqis if they counterattack. We'll advance to Khazer, but the Americans should be with us." The American commander agrees. But then he says the Americans can't move today because they have no aircraft support.

In the afternoon, I stop in the electrical market to fix the car battery and see groups of men in every shop glued to the television. The Americans have dropped a bomb on Al Jazeera's Baghdad office, killing a reporter. One man sit-

ting in a chair beneath cans of interior spray paint and hydraulic bottlenecks says, sarcastically, "I think it is in the Geneva Convention that the journalists should not be hit." "That's America. They don't care about anybody," says another. We see images of bloodied journalists shuttled into cars. The men cluck their tongues.

"How can such a technically advanced country, which knows what we eat and do daily, say they didn't know there were journalists and civilians in that hotel?" one asks. Another says he's going to find the local Al Jazeera correspondents to give them his condolences. I'm stunned. Northern Iraq is probably the most pro-U.S. pocket on the planet these days.

WEDNESDAY: Early morning, I get out of my car in Merga, an Arab Christian village in the hills above Mosul, which was liberated last night after the Iraqi army's 5th Corps withdrew to Mosul. It's a tiny stone hamlet on the slope of a mountain. Children and women are cheering and laughing. As I walk into the central square, an Arab man smiles and whistles and offers me a small, red apple. "For you," he says. "We are so happy for getting rid of the Iraqi army."

I follow him past a small crowd in the village square, up a slope to a Syrian Orthodox church. "This apple was like a miracle to us," he says, "because we could not buy apples. My daily salary was two thousand Iraqi dinars, while a kilo of apples was two thousand dinars. I haven't eaten an apple in five years." Of course I offer him back his apple, and he accepts, and I ask where the fruit came from. "The *peshmerga*," he says—the Kurdish fighters have filtered through the village throughout the night and early morning.

The church's priest, however, is afraid to talk. He says he and everyone in Merga has relatives in neighboring villages still under Saddam's thumb, and he fears retribution. "You should understand, there's no trust left, even between brothers," he tells me. "One brother living in the same house may be working for the regime." Then, in the only moment of satisfaction he allows himself, he says with restraint, "We have a saying, 'Whatever you gain by the sword, you'll lose by the sword.'"

We pick up a young man who wants to take us up to the mountain monastery. He tells us about his handicapped father, whose leg was amputated. He tells us that he deserted the army to try and earn money to support the seven members of his family. The village is so small that the authorities found out and threatened to cut his handicapped father's food rations. So back he went to the army. I ask him about the Baath Party members in the village, and he says, "My uncle was the leader. He was chosen by the people. We had to have a Baath Party official, and, if we didn't choose our own, they'd have resettled someone from another part of Iraq here, which we couldn't accept." My satellite phone rings. A friend from London telling me Baghdad has fallen and civilians are throwing flowers at American troops. I tell our Arab friend. He exhales as if the breath has been sucked out of him by an icy pool. "Help us, God. Wonderful. Wonderful." ■

BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS Birds and Others

THE STATISTICS ARE STAGGERING. **WINGED MIGRATION**, a French documentary about birds in flight, took four years to make. It employed, as it proceeded, a total crew of four hundred fifty. It was shot in a global variety of places—or over them, rather—to capture the four principal migration routes: those used by North American birds, European and Asian birds, and Southeast Asian birds. Needed for the cinematography were gliders and model gliders, helicopters and model ones, light motorized aircraft, and balloons. More than fifty species of birds were followed, usually on their southward autumn flights but also heading northward in the spring.

The statistics matter because the resulting ninety-minute film is lovely and astonishing. Everyone who has ever seen a migrating flock of birds, of any kind, has wondered at least for a moment about them. Some information is given to us painlessly by a narrator—for instance, the long-distance champions seem to be the waders that migrate 6,200 miles twice a year from the Arctic Circle to Africa and back. But this film clarifies—dramatizes—an obvious yet marvelous fact: while we trudge along, wherever we are, thousands and thousands of other creatures are weaving away at invisible patterns of flight over our heads. What is astonishing is the patterns. And it is lovely because, from Icarus on, at least an iota in every one of us has longed, however briefly, to fly. Aircraft, even gliders, are not the same thing.

The director-writer-producer was Jacques Perrin, the Frenchman who has been an actor but has been spending more of his time as a producer of films about natural history and anthropology. (Perrin produced the enthralling *Himalaya* seen here in 1999, an account of isolated Nepalese vil-

lagers and their trading treks through snowy heights.) Perrin planned the whole of *Winged Migration* and, with friends, devised the aircraft mentioned above that could accompany birds without frightening them. Yet technique doesn't quite explain how he knew that a certain tree on one bank of the Amazon was the place to which a par-

rot, in all its gaudiness, would fly from the other bank. This involved a different sort of planning.

The varieties of plumage and shape in birds, no matter how loyal we have been to *National Geographic*, are still breathtaking. The way in

which birds organize their flights is still mysterious. (How do they know what a V is and the order in which to form it?) For any viewer of this film, a few of the dozens and dozens of episodes will stand out. I think of several. Laggard or ailing members of a flock are quickly abandoned: the greatest good of the greatest number is the silent motto. A pelican (I think it was) snatches up a fish, then is perplexed with it crosswise in its beak. Standing in the stream, it has no place to lay the fish down and grasp it otherwise. So it juggles the fish in the air until, head first, the fish slides down the pelican's gullet. And for sheer beauty nothing in the film surpasses the shot, *from above*, of a flock of white geese flying over a landscape of autumn foliage.

What an extraordinary idea it was to make this film. What a splendid achievement.

Sociologists of the future will have been greatly helped in at least one way by filmmakers of our day. One sector of today's society has been fixed thoroughly in films: adolescence. Quite apart from documentaries, fiction films in recent years have dealt with troubled and uncertain adolescents around the world. France, Belgium, Britain, China, Brazil, Finland, and Mexico are only

some of the venues, besides of course our own sunny shores. The number continues to grow, material for social historians.

Most of the situations in these films are genuinely troublesome, and most of the films about them are sincere. But sincerity is not enough when, a few minutes after a film begins, we know we are going to make a familiar journey through the parental and sexual and environmental troubles of teenagers. It would take a fairly brutal coolness to dismiss these films *en bloc* as a tired genre; still, by now the best of them only increase a viewer's sense of helplessness. What can any of us do to improve these social problems? What can any of us do to hasten the youngsters' maturity?

Peter Sollett has an answer to these questions—an answer that is always available but seldom found. He makes his people interesting. **RAISING VICTOR VARGAS** is about Latino teenagers on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and as we learn this, we brace ourselves for tedium. But the tension soon relaxes because these teenagers themselves are appealing. This is Sollett's first feature film—he has previously made only one short—and it shows, more than exceptional talent for cinema itself, his ability to evoke character, in a kind of sidewise off-hand way, and to create a sense of community both within and around the film.

The story is agreeably negligible. Sollett is less concerned with plot twists than with moderate action that will reveal his people. Victor is about sixteen, a young rooster in the neighborhood. He is attracted by Judy, a pretty but reserved coeval, at the local swimming pool. She is less attracted, but he finally wins her friendship. He is a troublesome youth, difficult for his grandmother to handle, but there is a reality in Victor, a hint of possible deep feeling, that has more effect on Judy than his various ploys of wooing. They become intimate.

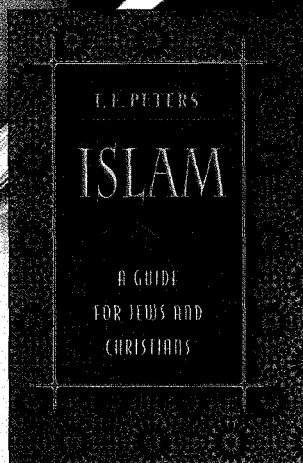
More happens. In an environment where boyfriend and girlfriend are identification tags, licenses for intimacy, Victor and Judy discover that there is more to their attraction for each other than the usual dating. Set in a context of daily tugs and troubles with Victor's younger brother and sister and their friends, the film is about the discovery of love.

The appeal of the film grows from the two leading actors. Victor Resuk is funny,

WINGED MIGRATION
(Sony Pictures Classics)

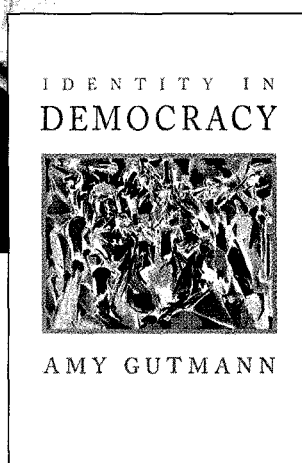
**RAISING
VICTOR VARGAS**
(Samuel Goldwyn)

Open Books. Open Minds.



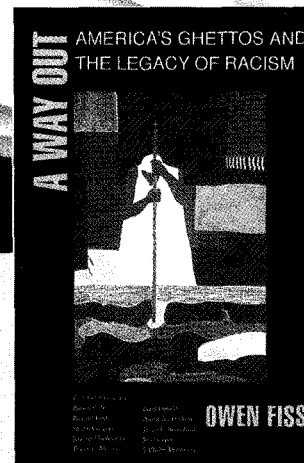
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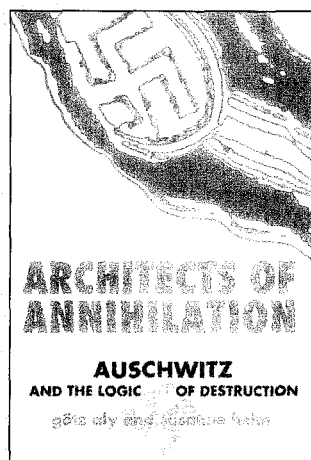
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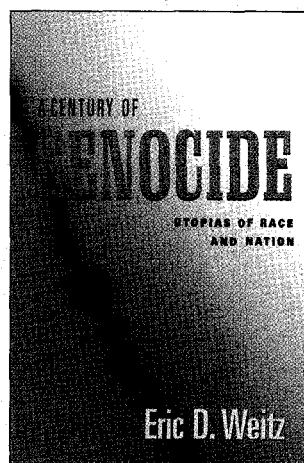
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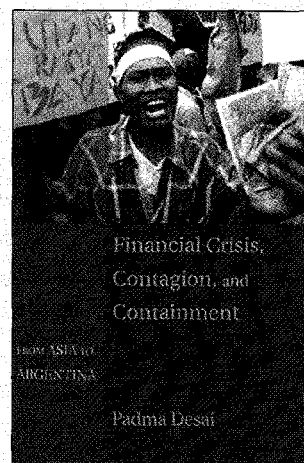
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moody, hungry in the leading role, and Judy Marte as Judy has, besides her good looks, considerable poise. Most of their scenes are basically familiar; but these two young people are free of cliché. Sollett tells us that all the dialogue was improvised. He had written a screenplay for the guidance of the producers and the crew, but he asked the actors to improvise, to speak as they knew these characters would speak in these situ-

ations. This ad hoc approach is hardly new, but the result here is exceptionally good. Most of the improvised dialogue, in quarrels and resolves, has a kind of cozy ungainliness and spark.

Title Correction. The French film reviewed here two weeks ago as *That Girl From Paris* is really called *The Girl From Paris*. Pardon, mam'selle. ■

Tzvetan Todorov Exposures

REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS

By Susan Sontag
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux,
131 pp., \$20)

ONE OF THE GREAT PLATITUDES of our epoch is that images, in particular photographic or filmed images, transmit messages that are much clearer and stronger than words, which disguise the truth more than they reveal it. But in truth nothing could be less certain: a photograph can stun us, but taken out of context it may not convey any significant meaning. You see a mutilated corpse, you are moved and overcome by shock or pity; but you do not yet know who this corpse is, nor why this person has been killed, nor by whom; nor whether this is a case that warrants an appeal to vengeance, or on the contrary an appeal for peace, or whether it is only an incitement to meditate on the fragility of human existence. Sentences have a subject and a predicate, a part that delimits what is being discussed and another part that says something about it. But images are subjects without predicates: they evoke the world intensely, but they do not tell us, of themselves, what we should think about it.

Susan Sontag's small and rather digressive book suggests this idea, among many others; but in a way the book resembles its subject, the photographic image, in that it contains more evocations than judgments. Sontag summons facts, and summarizes the different interpretations to which they lend themselves, but she does not hasten to formulate arguments. Often her analyses end with a question for which we must ourselves find the answer; or indeed by refuting all

the possible answers that come to mind.

The essay's structure is not scholarly. Its principal theme is articulated by its title: why do we take pleasure in seeing the suffering of others? And, supposing that we do, does this not entail certain political and moral perplexities? Around this vast subject Sontag hangs observations and musings on a variety of themes. One sometimes has the impression of a long fireside conversation from which we have only the contributions of one participant. Sontag knows her subject well, and she expresses herself elegantly. She is at ease in the history of photography and in the history of painting, in the analysis of history and in the analysis of the media, and she never slides into pedantry. Nor does she seek to force her ideas upon us, but rather to make us reflect, with some melancholy, upon a range of troublesome topics.

Even if it does not directly pertain to the book's central subject, for example, there is the fact, well known by twentieth-century historians, that military action was long considered perfectly legitimate as long as its victims were colonized populations, far away and exotic. When they took place in Europe, however, such actions risked being seen as war crimes. Thus General Franco commanded the extermination of "enemies" in Morocco in the 1920s without provoking a single raised eyebrow; but transposed to his native country in the 1930s, these same methods aroused widespread indignation. Arthur Harris, a young commander in the Royal Air Force, could boast in 1924 of the systematic destruction that he wreaked upon the "rebel" villages of Iraq, when "within forty-five minutes a full-sized village can be practically wiped out and a third of its inhabitants killed by four or five machines which offer them no

real target." He could do the same again when, on February 13, 1945, he ordered the incineration of "more than a hundred thousand civilians, three-fourths of them women," during the RAF firebombing of Dresden. But sixty years later many people question the legitimacy of this latter massacre. We continue to discriminate between "us" and "them" in the infinitely less murderous domain that is the circulation of photographic images: "we" appear in images as individuals, if not with proper names; "they" illustrate always and only a situation, an attitude, an emotion.

Then, too, there are the multiple uses that we make of memory—a human capacity that is much more ambiguous than the new cultural popularity of commemoration would have us believe. For one thing, the constant reminders of the past keep wounds open, and thereby lead to violence. "Too much remembering (of ancient grievances: Serbs, Irish) embitters," Sontag remarks. "To make peace is to forget." Moreover, memory usually serves simply as a reinforcement of the self—a pardonable but not particularly laudable activity. One likes to recall one's past as a hero or a victim, rather than the situations in which one's group played a less glorious role. In this regard Sontag writes that "to have a museum chronicling the great crime that was African slavery in the United States of America would be to acknowledge that the evil was here. Americans prefer to picture the evil that was *there*, and from which the United States is exempt."

The simple evocation of a painful past awakens emotion, but this of itself is an insufficient response: it is always better to analyze and to think. The compassion felt in the face of disaster must not become a substitute for the need for action. And a lucid analysis, in its turn, demands that we discard our egocentric preconceptions. Sontag recounts, in this regard, a very telling anecdote about the inhabitants of Sarajevo, who protested against an exhibition that mixed the images of their sufferings with those of similar atrocities committed in Somalia: "It's intolerable to have one's own sufferings twinned with anybody else's." Intolerable, yes; but it is also indispensable to anyone who wishes to think, rather than simply to be outraged.

Finally, too—though the list of possible subjects is far from being exhausted—there is the singular status of images, and in par-

Tzvetan Todorov is the author, most recently, of IMPERFECT GARDEN: THE LEGACY OF HUMANISM (Princeton University Press).

ticular of photographic images. Wherein does their specificity lie? Is it that, unlike words, but also unlike painted pictures, they present us with an authentic piece of reality and lead us, by this shortcut, directly to the truth? Clearly not. It is hardly necessary to mention the many cases in which photographs have been retouched, or, more numerous still, in which the photographed objects have been arranged to create a better effect. (This was the case with some of the most celebrated war photographs by Roger Fenton and Matthew Brady, by Robert Capa and Yevgeny Khaldei.) What is decisive is the choice to photograph *this* and not *that*. "It is always the image that someone chose," Sontag observes; "to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude." For this reason, photography is as subjective as drawing or narrative—even if it has a less determined meaning than the latter. The specificity of the photographic image lies elsewhere: not in the greatest fidelity to the exterior world, but in the physical continuity between the object represented and the subject taking the picture. That is why we experience a certain discomfort when the scene photographed is particularly violent: looking at images of lynchings and executions, one wonders whether the photographer, rather than seeking a better angle for his photograph, ought not to have thrown himself upon the torturers in an effort to disarm them.

SONTAG'S MAIN THEME IS HARDLY new. Since time immemorial we have been aware of the fascination provoked by the misery of others. She cites a famous passage from Plato's *Republic*, to which one might add Lucretius: "Tis sweet, when the sea is high and winds are driving, / To watch from shore another's anguished striving." Or Montaigne: "In the midst of compassion we feel within us I know not what bittersweet pricking of malicious pleasure in seeing others suffer." Or La Rochefoucauld: "We all have strength enough to endure the troubles of others." Or Burke, or Hazlitt, or Balzac. Or the French writer and philosopher Georges Bataille, who admitted that he gazed at least once a day at an especially atrocious photograph from China in which one sees a man skinned alive. But why? What is gained from the contemplation of such sadistic images? Why does a great proportion of Western painting represent the Massacre of the Innocents, and the flaying of Marsyas, and the agony of Laocoön—when it is not depicting the slow and agonizing death of a man named Jesus?

HELPING THE TERRORISTS: THE ANTI-ISRAEL DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGN

The hate America left, which has formed a fifth column in this country to betray us from within, is also targeting Israel as America's ally in the Middle East. Israel is the canary in the mine. What happens to this small, vulnerable nation will eventually happen to America itself. Yasser Arafat was Saddam's staunchest ally in the first Gulf War. Arafat built the first terrorist training camps. Palestinian terrorists were involved in the first bombing of the World Trade Center in February 1993 and the attack on the Khobar Towers which killed 19 U.S. servicemen in 1998. Suicide bombing began as a tactic of leftwing terrorists against Israeli civilians. It reached its culmination on 9/11 in Washington and New York.

Now the left has launched a new campaign to destroy Israel's economy and align Americans with the terrorist enemy. It is called the "Divest From Israel Campaign" and is active on college and university campuses nationwide.

The campaign falsely links Israel with South Africa's apartheid policy—in order to evoke the same passionate hatred for Israel that college students and faculty used to hold towards the white government of South Africa. This is a lie of Hitlerian proportions.

Apartheid was the morally repugnant practice of racial division and racial supremacy. Israel is a democracy. Despite the fact that the Arab states declared war on Israel and have maintained a state of war for more than fifty years, Israel's Arab citizens have more rights than the citizens of any Muslim or Arab state anywhere. In particular they have more rights than the Arabs of the West Bank who live under the brutally despotic and corrupt regime of the Palestine Authority.

According to Edward Said, once a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization's National Council, there is, "a total absence of law or the rule of law in the Palestinian autonomy areas." Said has spoken of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as "our Papa Doc," a reference to the former butcher of Haiti.

In contrast, Arabs enjoy civil liberties and civil rights including the right to vote in Israel's democratic system. Arabs have their own political party in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, with ten percent of the seats. They've served in high-level government positions. They have the rights and protections of the citizens of any democracy—rights that are systematically denied to the citizens of all the Muslim, Arab and terrorist states, without protest from the anti-divestment movement.

The Arabs who live in refugee camps in the West Bank do so because of the refusal of the Arab states to relocate them. (Israel by contrast has relocated hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from the Arab states during Arab-Israel wars.) But Palestinian Arabs are not allowed to become citizens of any Arab country except Jordan. Sixty percent of the Palestinians have endorsed suicide bombings and the goal of destroying the Jewish state. Yet, the divestment movement wants all 5 million of these declared enemies of Israel to have "the right of return" to the state they hate.

The goal of Palestinian terrorism and of the divestment movement is to destroy Israel and to push the Jews into the sea.

The divestment campaign is not a movement of individuals concerned about the rights of Palestinians. It is part of the same international leftist cause that regards America as "the Great Satan," whose goal is the destruction of democracy and the West.

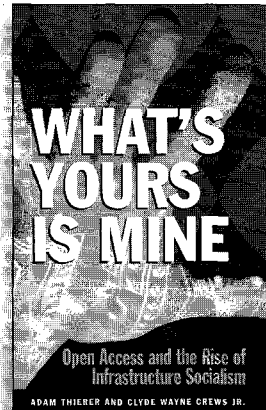
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It is not enough to say that suffering sells better than happiness; this only begs the question. The moralists of the past provided a first reply to the question, which one could summarize thus: watching the suffering of others brings us a certain pleasure because we recognize at the same time that we ourselves are exempt from this distress. No man is an island; whether we wish it or not, we are constantly comparing ourselves to others, and to see them unhappy throws into relief our own happiness, just as the sight of their triumphs can plunge us into melancholy. Why do they enjoy such good fortune, and we do not?

But this explanation seems limited when one tries to comprehend the spell that has been cast upon the faithful, for centuries, by the bloodied body of the crucified messiah. And the same is true, in its way, of Bataille's tortured Chinese prisoner. The answer here would be, rather, that the image of Christ's suffering has this effect because it embodies, for believing Christians, an essential aspect of the human condition. Christ sacrificed himself to save mankind; owing to his sacrifice, salvation is possible. He suffered greatly, to be sure, but he thereby fulfilled the divine plan, and we owe him gratitude. In a similar but secular way, when we look—without pleasure, perhaps, but with an undeniable fascination—at the bodies of lynched African Americans, or at Japanese carbonized by atomic explosions, or at Vietnamese transformed into purulent sores by napalm, we, too, discover an essential truth—about human nature or, more modestly, about human politics. Such images remind us of the evil of which we and those like us are capable, and so they are very welcome, in all their disturbing ugliness, because they shake us out of our complacency about ourselves. We generally prefer to anesthetize ourselves with notions that are more flattering to us, to see ourselves as rational beings toiling ceaselessly for the universal good.

It is a good thing, therefore, that these horrific images exist. "It seems a good in itself," Sontag suggests, "to acknowledge, to have enlarged, one's sense of how much suffering caused by human wickedness there is in the world we share with others." But many other questions are born of this answer. Doesn't the multiplicity—and therefore the familiarity—of these images destroy the disabused feeling about the world that they are charged with eliciting? By seeing so many massacres, do we not become numbed to the blood? Sontag does not think so. Anyway, there is a practical consideration: it is hard to imagine a way of su-

pervising all the world's televisions so that they do not exceed some daily quota of brutality. Another facet of the same problem concerns the blurring of fiction and reality, of virtual images and real wars: having seen so many disaster films, so many acted murders, will we still be able to be moved by a catastrophe in our own town? Sontag thinks this danger is exaggerated, that most people are morally and cognitively sound enough to see the difference between entertainment and reality. "To speak of reality becoming a spectacle is a breathtaking provincialism," she properly asserts. "It universalizes the viewing habits of a small, educated population living in the rich part of the world. . . . It assumes that everyone is a spectator. It suggests, perversely, unseriously, that there is no real suffering in the world. . . . There are hundreds of millions of television watchers who are far from inured to what they see on television. They do not have the luxury of patronizing reality."

IMAGES OF DISTRESS AND SUFFERING are threatened also from another side: they risk being beautiful. We experience a certain malaise when we come away with this perversely pleasing impression. It is a reproach frequently leveled at Sebastião Salgado, and in particular at his series *Migrations*. The offense here is aestheticism: to avoid making a moral judgment by making an aesthetic one, to limit one's reaction to "it's beautiful" or "it's not beautiful," even in the face of revolting events to which one expects the reaction "this is evil." Nero fiddled while Rome burned, and Ukrainian scientists stood on a balcony to admire the fireworks produced by the explosion of the central reactor at Chernobyl.

There are several sides to this problem. One is linked to the presence of the photographer: he must not give us the impression that he could have prevented the disaster but refrained from doing so in order to come away with a fine photograph or to experience an intense sensation. What can shock in some of Salgado's images is not their beauty but their generality—all the exoduses of the earth are confused and run together, severed from their concrete political contexts—and the anonymity of his photographic subjects, stripped of their individuality and transformed into symbols of distress. "It is significant," Sontag notes, "that the powerless are not named in the captions."

Moreover, the discomfort evoked by certain images of catastrophe—the ones

that we say are "too beautiful to be true"—proceeds from an aesthetic judgment rather than an ethical one. They lack internal coherence. If their purpose is to make us more sensitive to disaster, then the very beauty of the image becomes a distraction and a discomfort. And if they are designed to make us admire beauty, why focus only upon the children in rags, or upon the emaciated man? What we call the truth of an image—which is not reducible to the fact that the object photographed exists somewhere in the world—is at the same time its beauty; and if the truth and the beauty are separated, both suffer.

That we choose to look at the suffering

of others should not make us feel guilty, but neither should it be a source of pride. For the word is as necessary as the image: the latter strikes the imagination (which is always too weak), the former helps us to understand. Moreover, representation, even with the best will in the world, cannot replace experience. No filmed bombardment can reproduce the effect of actual falling bombs, of the bodies of loved ones dug from the ruins. This is doubtless one of the reasons why wars, the most abundantly represented events in the history of mankind, still continue. We never seem to know them well enough. ■

—translated by Claire Messud

Benny Morris

The Rejection

Bleak conclusions from the history of a people.

THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE:

A HISTORY

By Baruch Kimmerling
and Joel S. Migdal

(Harvard University Press,
608 pp., \$45)

WHAT ARE THE PALESTINIANs after? There are two basic interpretations of their actions in the past three years, which began with their rejection of the Barak-Clinton compromise proposals and the launching of the ongoing terroristic and guerrilla assault on Israel known as the Aqsa Intifada. According to one view, the Palestinians are conducting a rebellion against a repressive military occupation and their aim is to establish a peaceful Palestinian state alongside Israel in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which comprise 22 percent of historic Palestine. According to another view, they aim to destroy Israel and replace it with a Palestinian Arab (and perhaps Islamic) state in all of historic Palestine, "from the river to the sea." In this view,

ejecting Israel from the territories is merely a stage on the road to Israel's liquidation, which, like the ultimately successful Islamic assault on the medieval Crusader kingdoms, may take several centuries.

To judge from the declarations in English of their secular Fatah-dominated leadership, headed by Yasir Arafat, the Palestinians have strived since 1988 for a Palestinian state alongside Israel: the "two-state solution." To judge from the statements of some of these same Fatah leaders (including Arafat) in Arabic, and from the pronouncements by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, they seek Israel's destruction and replacement by an Arab (or Islamic) state. Why the forked tongue of most of the Fatah leaders? Perhaps they really aspire to a two-state solution but feel that they must appease their people with rejectionist pronouncements, so as to assure their hold on the leadership and their room for maneuver in the continuous struggle against the rejectionists and the Islamicists in their midst. Perhaps, like the Islamicists, they really intend to destroy Israel but feel that they must dupe sympathetic Israelis and Western supporters of Israel who might be antagonized by a frank rejectionism.

There are also a very small number of Fatah-affiliated figures, notably Sari Nusseibeh, the president of Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, who may genuinely desire a two-state compromise, and who say the

Benny Morris is professor of Middle East history at Ben-Gurion University and the author, most recently, of THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM: GLUBB PASHA, PALESTINE AND THE JEWS (I.B. Tauris & Co).



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same things in different forums and in different languages; but they carry little weight among the Palestinian public and leadership. Nusseibeh himself was recently dismissed by Arafat from his position as the PLO official responsible for Jerusalem, and his dismissal caused barely a ripple in the Palestinian press and the Palestinian "street."

In their new book, which is actually just a revision of a book that they published ten years ago, Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal write that their "central argument" is that "the creation of the Palestinian nation has been as much the product of events, acts, and institutions at the grassroots level as it has been the doing of top leaders." So let us attend to the grassroots: to judge by Palestinian opinion polls and street demonstrations, most Palestinians today do not seek only the liberation of the territories from Israel's occupation. They seek also the destruction of Israel. Palestinians interviewed in the streets of Ramallah and Jenin often say so bluntly. And the masses express their hatred of the Jewish state by supporting suicide bombings inside Israel proper, against buses, supermarkets, and restaurants. For the Palestinians, each suicide bombing represents a microcosmic assault on Israel's existence; and each street celebration following successful bombings (as followed Saddam Hussein's missile attacks on Israel's cities in 1991) testifies to the popularity of the method and the goal.

Kimmerling and Migdal point out that in the early and mid-1990s, before the Oslo peace process began to expire, opinion polls showed that the Palestinians largely supported a two-state solution. The writers believe that the Palestinians are not governed by an inherent, unshakable rejectionism. If conditions and developments are favorable, they will agree to a compromise; but if circumstances turn sour, as they have during the past few years, they will veer toward rejectionism. Like good liberals, Kimmerling and Migdal generally give Arafat and his colleagues the benefit of the doubt, dismissing their rejectionist assertions to Arab and Muslim audiences as so much posturing. They repeatedly and happily point to Arafat's more conciliatory declarations, as in his famous piece in *The New York Times* last year, in which he assured his readers that while he supports the Palestinian refugees' "right of return," he would take Israel's demographic concerns into account when considering its implementation.

But even Kimmerling and Migdal, to judge by their tone at the end of the book, are far from sanguine. Recent Palestinian

actions, it would seem, have managed to jar even their liberal moorings. They conclude rather grimly:

At this writing, it is unclear whether the Intifada can truly be a war of liberation—liberating Palestinians not only from Israeli rule but from illusions about what the future holds for them. If the war of liberation can be a step toward internal reconstruction and acceptance of two states in historic Palestine, it will have succeeded. But if it leads only to the glorification of death and to the illusion that Israel, like the earlier Crusader state, will simply melt away, then it will do nothing but prolong the Palestinians' bondage.

Speaking for myself, Palestinian behavior during the past three years has provided the unhappy ground for a serious re-examination of my own political assumptions. But, to be completely candid, it is not just the experience of the past three years that has provoked this reconsideration. I have spent the past twenty years studying the hundred years of Zionist-Palestinian conflict. At first I focused on the revolutionary events of 1948. Later I began to study the decades before and after the establishment of Israel—and this research, in conjunction with recent events, has left me profoundly unhopeful.

I have come away from my examination of the history of the conflict with a sense of the instinctive rejectionism that runs like a dark thread through Palestinian history—a rejection, to the point of absurdity, of the history of the Jewish link to the land of Israel; a rejection of the legitimacy of Jewish claims to Palestine; a rejection of the right of the Jewish state to exist. And, worse, this rejectionism has over the decades been leavened by a healthy dose of anti-Semitism, a perception of the Jew as God's and humanity's unchosen.

II.

THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL movement, since its inception in the 1920s, has viewed the struggle against Zionism as a zero-sum game: if the Jews win, we are lost. In 1934, when David Ben-Gurion told the Cambridge-educated Musa al-Alami, a moderate notable who was assistant attorney general of Mandatory Palestine, that Zionism was bringing progress and prosperity to the Arabs, Alami replied that he would sooner

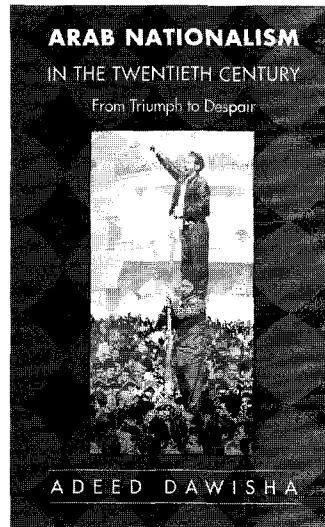
Palestine remain "impoverished and barren for another hundred years" than see Zionism succeed. Palestinian leaders and preachers, guided by history and religion, have traditionally seen the Jews as an inferior race whose proper place was as an abased minority in a Muslim polity; and the present situation, with an Arab minority under Jewish rule, is regarded as a perversion of nature and divine will. As Sheik Sulayman al-Taji, a leading Palestinian notable, declared in a poem in 1913: "Jews, sons of clinking gold . . . are the weakest of all peoples and the least of them." And Haj Muhammad Amin al-Husseini, the Palestinian national leader during the 1930s and 1940s (in effect Arafat's predecessor), often cited *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a guidebook to history.

More recently, in its founding charter or "Covenant," which was composed in 1988, Hamas (which today commands the support of about one-half of the Palestinians and probably a far greater proportion in Gaza and the refugee camps) described "the Jews" as "an instrument of evil"; and it ascribes the outbreak of the French and Russian revolutions, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the eruption of World War I and World War II to Jewish machinations. The "Covenant" posits the destruction of Israel as the organization's main political goal, and jihad as its method. Hamas (and Islamic Jihad) pamphlets during the first intifada, from 1987 to 1991, regularly described the Jews as "sons of apes and pigs."

For Arafat, the Jews are a curio, the caftaned, bearded worshippers of his childhood, seen making their way to the Wailing Wall, heads bowed, eyes averted, through the Arab markets of the Old City. The Palestinian National Charter, the platform of the PLO, calls for the dismantling of "the Zionist entity." Though the Palestinian Authority in the 1990s committed itself to annulling the relevant clauses, it is unclear whether they have in fact been permanently revoked. Nothing more revealing was said at the Camp David summit in the summer of 2000 than Arafat's response to President Clinton's effort to persuade him to compromise over Jerusalem's Temple Mount (Al-Haram al-Sharif, the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock). Arafat said: "What temple? The Jews had no temples there. It's a legend." Arafat—and this is common fare in sermons in the mosques of the West Bank and Gaza—was denying that the Jewish people had any historic connection to Jerusalem and, by extension, to Palestine.

The Palestinian and pan-Arab rout of 1948, the *nakba* or "catastrophe," and the

Important.



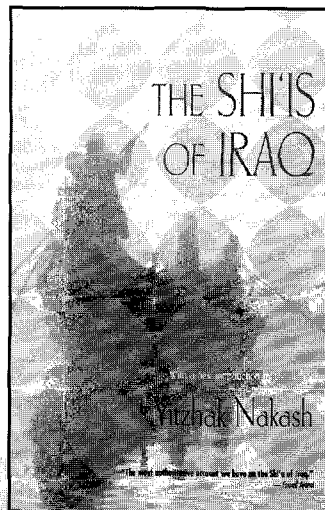
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continuous defeats that Israel has since inflicted on the Arab world, as Kimmerling and Migdal rightly perceive, are seen by most Palestinians (and probably by most Arabs and Muslims) as a basic violation or disruption of the "cosmic order," something humiliating and unfathomable. Arafat likes to compare himself to Saladin (who was also the hero of the late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad), the Muslim Kurdish general who defeated the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. Arafat continuously speaks of "planting the Arab flag on the walls of Jerusalem" as Saladin did in 1187. That act symbolized the destruction of the Crusader state—and Arafat's use of the phrase is understood by his Arab listeners to refer to the destruction of the Zionist "kingdom." The "cosmic order" can be restored only by the liquidation of Israel, an alien, infidel implant on sacred Muslim soil, and the return (*al-awda*) of the refugees to their patrimony.

SOME OF THIS STORY CAN BE found in Kimmerling and Migdal's book. But the almost unrelenting rejectionist message of Palestinian history is routinely blunted by soporific padding. The prettification begins on the

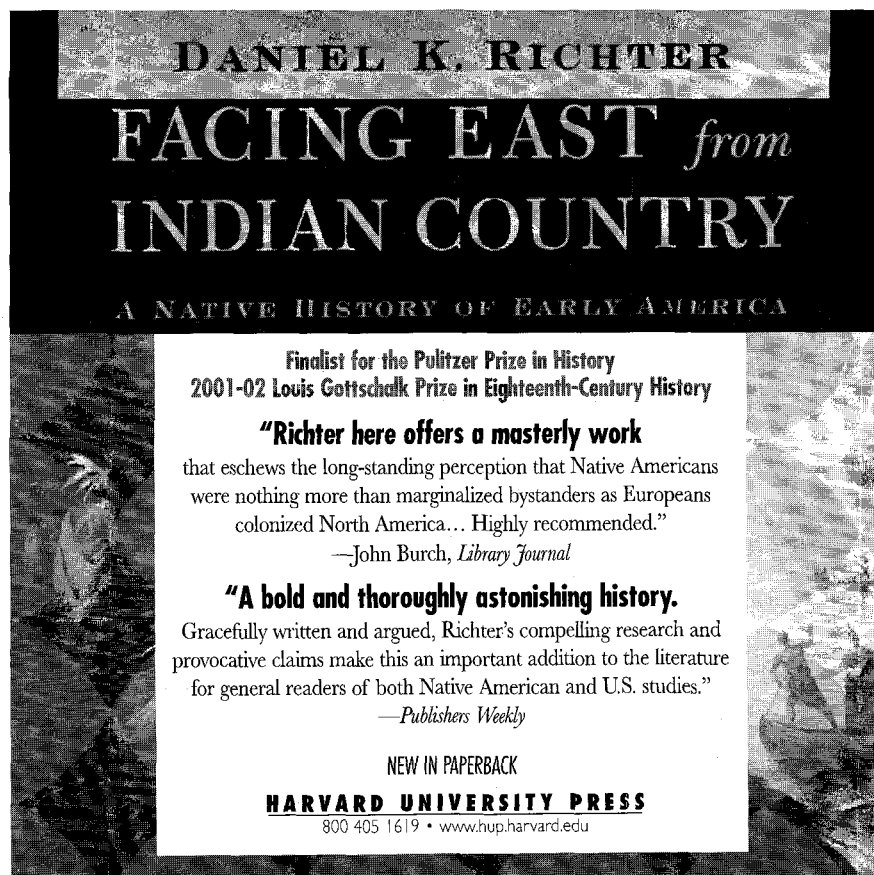
book's cover, which shows a photograph of Palestinians demonstrating beneath an unfurled red, black, green, and white flag; the demonstrators are almost all smiling or resolute women and children, barely a male among them, and of course no guns, no bombs, no hate-filled faces.

Rather idiosyncratically, Kimmerling and Migdal point to a peasant revolt in Palestine against the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali in 1834 as the moment when the Palestinian people was born. The peasants (and the townspeople) refused to supply the Egyptians with the conscripts that they demanded. Within months, the rebels, who did not demand independence or "Palestinian rights" (if pressed to identify their "national" affiliation, they surely would have said they were Ottoman subjects, or "Arabs," or perhaps "residents of the Province of Syria"), were crushed, leaving no "national" values or tradition as a heritage. But Kimmerling and Migdal have it that this was the first of the succession of revolts against foreign occupiers—against the British from 1936 to 1939 and against the Israelis from 1987 to 1991 and from 2000 to 2003—that were to be the main expressions of Palestinian nationalism.

In focusing on 1834, Kimmerling and Migdal are implicitly denying that the Palestinian people was born in large measure as a response to Zionism. Most serious historians point instead to the 1920s and 1930s as the time when the Arabs of Palestine began thinking of themselves as a people separate from those of Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan (though, to be sure, they still regarded, and continue to regard, themselves as part of the wider Arab *umma* or nation), with a separate political destiny, and began to push for Palestinian independence and statehood. Between 1920 and 1935, Palestinian "nationalism" was propounded in a narrow circle of educated upper-class and middle-class families. During the revolt of 1936–1939, the national idea spread from the urban upper classes to much of the countryside, though—to the embarrassment of Palestinian nationalists—many villages refused to participate in the uprising, and many Palestinians, especially in late 1938 and 1939, helped the British and the Zionists to crush the revolt.

Since then, the Palestinians have indeed forged a collective identity and a separate history, which most historians view as necessary components of nationhood. Each Palestinian rebellion has been more popular and more massive than its predecessor, mirroring the spread of a national consciousness. The *nakba* of 1948 and the refugeeedom that followed constitute the fulcrum around which Palestinian national identity and purpose have crystallized. But this is not quite the whole story. The reach of Palestinian nationalism, at least in past decades, deserves to be viewed with a measure of skepticism. For most of the conflict with Zionism and Israel, most "Palestinians" have cared far more about their family, their clan, and their village than about some remote construction called "nationalism" or "the nation."

It is worth recalling that one of the reasons for the Zionist and Israeli success, before 1948 and since 1967, has been the excellent intelligence garnered from the thousands of Palestinians willing to spy against their own (and this holds true also for the two intifadas); and another reason has been the willingness—no, the eagerness—of Palestinians to sell land to Jews, both in Palestine before 1948 and in the territories since 1967. Israel's settlements in the West Bank and Gaza were built by tens of thousands of local Arab laborers. Despite the undoubted dedication of hundreds of contemporary suicide bombers, there is no reason to view the Palestinians as latter-day Vietnamese, who successively battled and beat



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the powerful Japanese, French, and American empires; or as latter-day Serbs, who for centuries beat off Ottoman and Germanic conquerors. I cannot see Serbs constructing homes for Albanians in Kosovo.

Palestinian nationalism developed peculiarly. It was influenced by the development of the national movements in the neighboring countries (particularly Syria and Egypt), and like them it emerged partly in response to the overbearing European imperialism to which it was subject; but it also developed as a response to the neighboring challenge of that other, more successful nationalist enterprise with which it competed—I mean Zionism. And this competitor repeatedly beat the Palestinian national movement over the head, and humbled and humiliated it, ultimately displacing more than half the Palestinians from their homes. (The vast majority of them, however, remained inside Palestine: in this sense, most of the Palestinian “refugees” are not refugees at all.) Then, in 1967, in a war provoked by the Arabs, Israel proceeded to conquer the rest of the land of Israel and then some.

Most national movements grow up in antagonism to neighboring nationalisms, and usually in conflict over borderlands. But in Palestine it was the whole of the homeland that was exclusively claimed by both peoples. It is difficult to think of any comparable case in modern history. There is little wonder, then, that the Palestinian national movement matured as a rejectionist enterprise; indeed, that the rejection of Zionism and all that it embodies has defined its essence. Rejectionism, like the drive to return to “the Lost Garden,” as Kimmerling and Migdal put it, is built into the Palestinians’ identity (what the authors call “Palestinism”). Perhaps the wonder is that Zionism overcame its own initial denial of the Palestinians and ultimately accepted their presence in, and the co-legitimacy of their claim to, Palestine.

IT IS WORTH NOTING, AT THIS POINT, a major asymmetry in the evolution of the Jewish national movement and the Palestinian national movement. The Zionists, too, at first sought sovereignty over the whole of the land. As one early Zionist, Ze’ev Dubnow, put it in October 1882, the first year of Zionist settlement in Palestine: “The ultimate goal . . . is, in time, to take over the Land of Israel and to restore to the Jews the political independence they have been deprived of for these two thousand years. . . . The Jews will yet arise and, arms in hand (if need be), declare

that they are the masters of their ancient homeland.” But over the decades the Zionists came to recognize that the land was inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Arabs who devised their own collective identity and began to resist the Jewish influx. Following the start of the Arab Revolt, the Zionist movement formally accepted—in 1937, in response to the Peel Commission recommendations—the principle of partition, meaning a division of Palestine between its two communities. And in 1947, the movement accepted both the principle of partition and the specific United Na-

tions General Assembly Resolution 181, which, positing the establishment of two states, awarded the Zionists some 55 percent of Palestine (most of it in the Negev desert) and the Palestinian Arabs some 40 percent.

Between 1949 and 1967, Israel existed quite happily without the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (And one day, if peace is ever achieved on the basis of a two-state solution, it will exist quite happily without those lands again.) The 1967 war, with Israel’s conquest of vast territories, conjured up the possibility—and, for many Israelis at the

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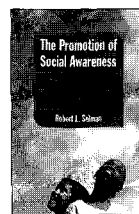
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time, the temptation—that Israel might permanently incorporate the West Bank and Gaza. This was the premise that sired the expansionist settlers' movement. But the years between 1967 and 1991 may be seen as a deviant period, a turbulent parenthesis in Zionist history. By the early 1990s, primarily under the impact of the first intifada, the Israelis reverted to their old acceptance of partition. This underlay the Rabin-Peres policy during the Oslo process and Barak's proposals at Camp David in 2000. And this acceptance of the necessity (and also the justice) of partition is still true of most of Israel's Jews, though many Palestinians suspect that Israelis secretly desire a "Greater Israel," much as many Arabs believe that Zionism was and remains ultimately bent on establishing a Jewish "kingdom" stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates, as prefigured in the Bible.

The shift in Zionist ideology from an ideologically pristine demand for all of Palestine to a sober acceptance of partition was not paralleled in the development of the Palestinian national movement. This asymmetry has underpinned the conflict since the 1930s. And the peculiarity of Palestinian nationalism has not been restricted to its ends. It has also characterized its means. It is not that Palestinian Arabs, or Arabs in general, are naturally terroristic or more terroristic than other peoples; but the Palestinian national movement has always lived under one foreign ruler or another, and so the violence to which it has regularly resorted has always been illicit and non-conventional. Until the mid-1990s, the Palestinians never had anything resembling an army. To give vent to their anger and their frustrations, and to further their ambitions, Palestinian violence against the Zionists, the British, and their fellow Arabs had always admixed (morally acceptable) guerrilla warfare—attacks on occupying foreign soldiers—with (morally repugnant) terrorism—attacks on unarmed civilians.

Of course, the Palestinians throughout their history have been weak—and guerrilla warfare and terrorism are the weapons of the weak. But at the deeper level of traditions, habits, and abilities, unconventional warfare suits them (witness the very poor performance of the PLO regular formations, with tanks and artillery, against the invading Israeli Defense Forces in southern Lebanon in June 1982). And in this sense the Palestinians, and especially Hamas, are in

After a Death

His wife waits by the gate. The afternoon meal is all but finished. What will you say to her, which of the speeches, long prepared, will fall

trippingly from your tongue?

The village center's just a short walk. The parson is a clever man, and fancies himself a puppeteer. You watched him play out Luther's amazement

with a small stringed toy. Still, the point is made.

We should all see differently, though of course, some do, some are made to do. So it seems, Lynn, so it seems (and here you pause,

thinking better): Well, let's go for a walk. I've been inside all day. The train must have been dreadful. But nice to leave the city?

Lynn's clothing is severe. She speaks

using her hands, and says she didn't expect any of it to happen. It's just chance, the chance we take. Yes, you say,

yes, Lynn. We took it. And you don't, or can't

touch even her arm. And she won't, can't grimace, laugh. It happened on a roadway, you say, in a German landscape. All of a sudden,

where God wasn't, God was. We might be so lucky.

JESSE BALL

sync with radical Islam's more general assault on the West—of which Israel, the "little Satan," is but a bridgehead in its region—and are natural participants in the age of terrorism that is upon us. (Myself, I have no doubt that there are elements among them, as there are among their Saudi and Afghani brothers, that will resort to chemical and biological weapons if they ever lay their hands on them.)

Moreover, the Palestinian national movement has always been characterized by undemocratic political structures and social norms. The establishment of a democracy has never been a major goal of the movement. In part, this has been due to the conditions under which Palestinian nationalists have usually labored (in secrecy and underground). But even more important have been historical and cultural factors. At no point in their history have Palestinian na-

tionalists ever been able to look back in time or to look sideways around themselves—at neighboring Arab countries—for models of democratic practice or aspiration. (Indeed, to the deep chagrin of the more enlightened among them, the only democracy the Palestinians have ever witnessed has been the Jewish society that flourished alongside them. Modern Islam abhors democracy.)

Palestinian society, when starting out early in the twentieth century on its march toward statehood, was governed by several dozen notable families that enjoyed largely feudal relations with the mass of the country's peasants and urban poor. (Arafat and the PLO did not emerge from these rural and urban poor classes.) The first and second intifadas have had almost nothing at all to do with the old notable families, who have preferred to keep their peace, and to continue to make money, under Israeli occupation—just as they abstained from leadership roles when it actually came to sacrifice and fighting, as in 1936–1939 and 1947–1948. But the tradition of non-democratic behavior by those wielding the gun still prevails.

There is something deeply troubled about the present condition of Palestinian society. Even some Palestinians believe this, and occasionally say so. The rubble-strewn streets of the Palestinian cities, the continued subsistence of most Pal-

estinians on donations from the international community, and above all the readiness of so many young Palestinians to become suicide bombers and the popularity of these suicide bombers within the Palestinian community: these are all signs of a sickness of the soul. A significant cause of this malaise is, of course, the triumph of Zionism and Israel, the agents of the Palestinian dispersion in 1948 and of the Palestinian subjugation since 1967; but that external cause is not the only cause.

III.

AFTER DEALING WITH THE allegedly decisive events of 1834, Kimmerling and Migdal, more realistically, move on to the years of British rule in Palestine, and the social and economic developments that

underlay the emergence of Palestinian nationalism. They look at the struggle for primacy between the coastal, Western-looking, modernizing towns of Jaffa and Haifa and the traditionalist, more Islamic hill centers of Nablus, Jerusalem, and Hebron. They devote a chapter to the revolt of 1936–39, in which the Palestinians, under Hussein (who, characteristically, fled to Lebanon in 1937), tried to eject the British, or at least to persuade them to halt Zionist immigration and development. They provide an inadequate chapter on the *nakba*, the collapse of Palestinian society in 1948 under the hammer blows of the war of their own making—which the Palestinians then and subsequently, in a metaphysical spin, viewed as “an immense conspiracy and . . . a monumental injustice” against themselves. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the Palestinian national movement has been the Palestinians’ view of themselves as perpetual victims of others—Ottoman Turks, British officials, Zionists, Americans—and never to appreciate that they are, at least in large part, victims of their own mistakes and iniquities. In the Palestinian *Weltanschauung*, they never set a foot wrong; their misfortunes are always the fault of others.

The inevitable corollary of this refusal to recognize their own historical agency has been a perpetual Palestinian whining—that, I fear, is the apt term—to the outside world to save them from what is usually their own folly. And the whining, more often than not, has been accompanied by mendacity. Thus it was in September and October 1936, half a year into the Arab Revolt, when they secretly appealed to the monarchs of the Arab states to save them from British suppression by issuing a call to the Palestinians to “graciously” halt their rebellion. Thus it was in April and May 1948, when they pleaded for the Arab states to invade Palestine and save them from the Jews (whom they had attacked between November 1947 and March 1948). Thus it was in September 1970, when they called upon the Arab world to save them from the Hashemite regime in Jordan, which they had just assailed and tried to subvert. And thus it is today, when Arafat and his minions, having unleashed terror on Israel’s cities, desperately appeal to the West and to the Arab states to save them from Israel’s wrath.

Kimmerling and Migdal move briskly through the resurrection of the Palestinian national movement in the 1960s, under the

PLO and Arafat; and Palestinian life under the post-1967 Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza; and the Palestinian failure to oust the occupier by means of violence in the 1970s and 1980s; and the start of the peace process, following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the first intifada of 1987–1991. Finally they arrive at the Oslo process, examining “What Went Right” and “What Went Wrong.”

Back in the 1990s, during the Oslo years, many Israelis shared a sense of cautious optimism. It was not that the terrorists had packed up and gone into retirement; indeed, in four attacks over an eight-day period in February and March 1996, Islamic fundamentalist suicide bombers slaughtered more than forty Israelis and injured about two hundred in the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and embarrassed the peacemaking Labor-led government so grievously that Shimon Peres lost the elections that spring to the Likud’s inexperienced Benjamin Netanyahu. Still, it appeared that the majority of Palestinians had at last chosen a different course. After a hundred years of saying no to every proposed compromise, their leadership seemed to have bowed to the judgment of reason and history, and agreed to

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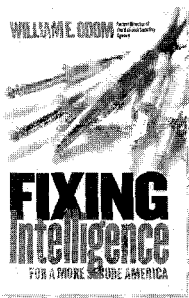
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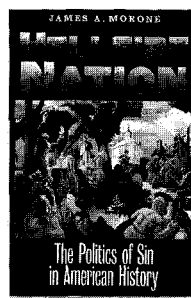
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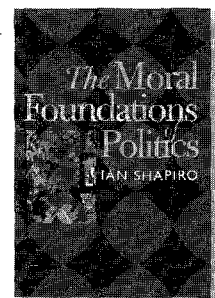
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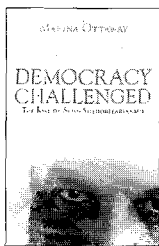
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join with the Israeli government led by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres in a process of conciliation that was leading, it seemed inevitably, to a settlement based on the partition of the land into two states.

There had been the American-engineered Middle East peace conference in Madrid, in 1991; the election in 1992, for the first time in fifteen years, of a conciliatory, Labor-led coalition government in Israel; the secret negotiation and then the very public signing on the White House lawn of the Oslo Agreement in 1993, in which Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and the PLO recognized Israel's "legitimate and political rights." There followed a series of bilateral negotiations and agreements that resulted in Israeli withdrawal from most of the Gaza Strip and the main towns of the West Bank; these were handed over to the PLO leadership, which was allowed to return from exile in Tunis. Arafat set up the self-governing Palestinian National Authority, and an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, at peace with and alongside Israel, seemed merely a matter of time—perhaps five or six years, as the core of the Oslo Agreement, the Declaration of Principles, envisioned. There were joyous celebrations in the streets of Gaza and Ramallah and Nablus and Jenin and Tul-karm, and solid if quieter satisfaction in Tel Aviv. As Kimmerling and Migdal remind us, more than 70 percent of the Palestinians and Israelis supported Oslo.

But then came the spoilers, the fundamentalists from both camps—the Hamas and Islamic Jihad knifemen and shooters and bombers, active since 1991, and, from the Jewish side, Baruch Goldstein, the doctor from Kiryat Arba who in 1994 slaughtered twenty-nine Muslim worshippers at the al-Ibrahimiya Mosque (the Tomb of the Patriarchs) in Hebron, and Yigal Amir, the Bar-Ilan University law student and settlements groupie who in 1995 shot Yitzhak Rabin in the back and killed him. Goldstein's rampage ignited suicide bombings, and Rabin's death crippled the Israeli peace camp.

Palestinian terrorism steadily drove the Israeli public rightward, undermining its willingness to compromise and curbing the government's ability to make concessions. The continued growth of the settlements, the daily humiliations of the continued semi-occupation, and the absence of visible economic benefits ate away at the Palestinians' apparent rejection of rejectionism. Inevitably, scheduled IDF withdrawals from further chunks of territory were postponed,

as were further rounds of peace talks; and each delay further embittered a segment of one public or the other. With his coalition falling apart, Rabin's successor Peres was forced into early elections, which Netanyahu won. Netanyahu spent his three years in power fending off Arab and American efforts to re-start the peace process; and this diplomatic freeze was in small part to account for the stillbirth of the Clinton-Barak peace initiative of 2000.

KIMMERLING AND MIGDAL'S analysis of what went wrong with Oslo is excellent, insofar as any analysis that does not give sufficient weight to Arafat's basic rejectionism and duplicity can do the trick. They accurately pinpoint the problem at the heart of Oslo, which rendered it unacceptable even to the segment of the Palestinian public and leadership that seemed sincerely willing to reach a two-state compromise: the chronological asymmetry in its implementation and in the respective fulfillment of expectations. Kimmerling and Migdal call this asymmetry the "frontloading" and "backloading" of benefits, by which they mean that Oslo obliged the Palestinians, immediately upon signing in August–September 1993, to deliver the recognition of Israel and its legitimacy—this was always the Palestinians' chief negotiating asset—as well as to assure Israel's security against terrorism. In contrast to this "frontloading," the agreement obliged Israel only to deliver segments of territory and slices of sovereignty to the Palestinians over a five- to six-year period. The main Palestinian demands—for full sovereignty over the whole of the West Bank and Gaza, sovereignty over East Jerusalem, a solution to the refugee problem—were all "backloaded," that is, deferred to some point after the five- to six-year interim period, subject to a successful conclusion of the "final status" negotiations. And so the major Palestinian political aspirations remained largely unmet in the crucial years between 1993 and 1999.

Kimmerling and Migdal attribute this asymmetry to the imbalance in power between the two sides: Israel was simply much more powerful than the Palestinians and, given the condition of the occupation, was able to dictate terms. But there was also an internal logic to the asymmetry that the authors too readily ignore. The recognition of Israel's legitimacy was a necessary initial component of any Israeli-Palestinian agreement; it was built into the very act of agreement. By starting to negotiate and to reach agreement with Israel, the Palestinians were effectively delivering the recogni-

tion that Israel desired. So it was an asset that the Palestinians had no way of preserving until some later time, when it could be traded for more territory or more sovereignty. (But, defying integrity and logic, the Palestinians tried to do just that when they repeatedly promised, and failed until 1995 to deliver, the "final" nullification of the Palestinian National Charter's clauses calling for Israel's extinction.)

Moreover, decades of Palestinian guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and deception had persuaded the Israeli leaders that they could take nothing on trust, and that the Palestinian leadership would have to demonstrate a willingness and an ability, over an extended period of time, to honor agreements and to curb their killers; and it was in the years from 1993 to 1998 that the Palestinians were meant to prove this purpose. Only then could Israel complete the handover of territory and the acknowledgment of sovereignty. Kimmerling and Migdal occasionally refer to the Palestinian terrorism of the 1930s, 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s, but they say not a word about Arafat's performance in violating almost every agreement that he ever signed, starting with those concluded in the late 1960s and early 1970s with Lebanon

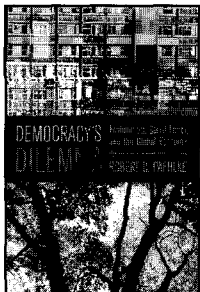
and Jordan. (The PLO repeatedly made and unilaterally broke commitments to honor the integrity of these host countries.) Nor does Arafat's astonishing record of mendacity earn a mention anywhere in this book.

Kimmerling and Migdal assert that Oslo had pulled "the veil from the myth that the Palestinians would accept nothing less than the destruction of Israel." But this is, at a minimum, naïve. They fail to address the possibility that Oslo, from Arafat's perspective, may have been a giant act of duplicity. He told a Muslim audience in a Johannesburg mosque in 1994 that he was willing to play along in order to win concessions but without ever intending to sign a final peace treaty that recognized Israel's permanent legitimacy and permanent boundaries.

KIMMERLING AND MIGDAL ALSO fail to address adequately the issue of the "right of return," which is central, I think, to a proper understanding of Palestinian politics and purposes. Through Oslo and the negotiations of 2000, the refugee issue was left untouched; but publicly and privately all Palestinian spokesmen insisted on Israeli acceptance of the "right of return"—

meaning the right of the refugees and their descendants to return to their places in the territory that became the state of Israel in 1948. Some 700,000 Palestinians were displaced in 1948, and the United Nations has more than 3.5 million Palestinian refugees on its rosters (comprising those still living from among the 700,000 and their descendants). The Palestinians claim that the true number is closer to five million.

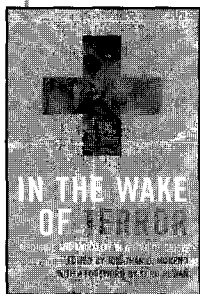
Israeli spokesmen, equally adamantly, insist that there can be no return of refugees from 1948, and that Israel can never concede the "right of return," anchored in U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194 (which also offered the alternative of "compensation" to those not wishing to return). The concession of such a "right" would inevitably lead to the creation of an Arab majority in Israel. Israel would cease to be a Jewish state. Most Israelis, including Ehud Barak, regard the Palestinian insistence on the "right of return" as a euphemism for the desire to destroy Israel. So long as Arafat and his colleagues insist on a "right of return" as a necessary component of a peace settlement, there will be no peace settlement—because, as Barak put it, Israel is unwilling "to commit suicide." Israel has a



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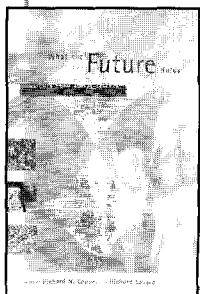
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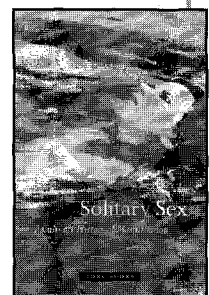
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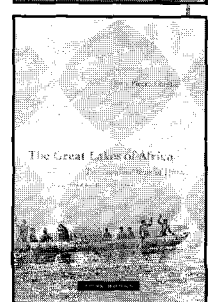


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population of fewer than five million Jews and 1.2 million Arabs. A mass return would give the Arabs a demographic edge almost instantly—and the Arab birth rate is far higher than the Jewish birth rate.

Kimmerling and Migdal are aware of the centrality of the “right of return” in the Palestinian ethos. They write that “[the right of return] has been the fundamental building block of Palestinianism.” A full return to “the Lost Garden” has “continued to be accepted as the basic tenet of Palestinianism.” The authors cite a study by the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information from 2000—when Barak and Clinton were offering the historic compromise, before the eruption of the Aqsa Intifada—based on a random sample of 1,600 refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. Of those surveyed, 98.7 percent rejected compensation in place of return. Among the non-refugees questioned, the figure was 93.1 percent. The right and the necessity of return is incessantly drummed into every child and adult by family, school, and the P.A. So it is no surprise, as Kimmerling and Migdal conclude, that the refugees continue “to respond as if basic political, social, and spatial conditions had not changed, as if it were possible to

travel back through time to some idyllic point in the past.” Indeed, the role of the refugee camps in the evolution of Palestinian nationalism has become so great that no Palestinian leader is likely to defy their will.

Kimmerling and Migdal observe that the Oslo accord “unveiled a large majority on each side ready . . . to accept two states.” But professing a two-state solution while continuing to insist on the “right of return” as an essential component of a settlement is meaningless blather. Kimmerling and Migdal fail to understand this. Some commentators believe that the Palestinian insistence on the “right of return” is merely tactical and diplomatic, but so long as this remains the official position, and the Palestinian leadership continues to pander politically to the people in the refugee camps, and the Palestinian masses are not encouraged to compromise on this demand, there will certainly be no change of direction.

IV.

THIS BOOK IS NOT PRECISELY an apologia for the people whom it studies. The authors are frequently critical of Palestinian

behavior over the past century or so. But Kimmerling and Migdal almost always match their censure of the Palestinians with criticism of the Zionists and Israel, as if it were somehow indecent to express the former without the latter. There is something compulsive about the evenhandedness of this book, and it sometimes has the effect of distorting history.

This, for example, is what Kimmerling and Migdal say about partition: “Proposals to divide the country between Jews and Arabs had been circulating since the 1937 Peel Commission Report without much success. Neither side liked the idea of splitting the small piece of land.” It is certainly true that neither side liked the idea, but in 1937, in 1947, and in 1993–2000 the Zionist leadership and then the Israeli leadership accepted—and in the latter years, even proposed—compromises based on the idea of partition, whereas the Palestinian leadership, under Hussein and again under Arafat, rejected all proposals for partition. The Palestinian rejection of the autonomy proposals agreed upon between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1978 at Camp David may be viewed in the same light: Sadat, and most commentators at the time, believed that the envisaged self-government in the West Bank and Gaza would have evolved into full-fledged Palestinian statehood. This was precisely why the Israeli right voted against the proposals.

Similarly, Kimmerling and Migdal write of “the retreat [since 2000] from an acceptance by each side of the inevitability and necessity of partitioning Palestine, of a two-state solution.” This is accurate with regard to the majority of Palestinians, but it flies in the face of every opinion poll conducted among the Israeli public in the past three years. A majority of Israelis, while supporting Barak’s and then Sharon’s anti-terrorist operations, continue to believe that Israel should in the end withdraw from the bulk of the West Bank and Gaza, and agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state. (Even Sharon now speaks about the eventual establishment of such a state, though the measure of his sincerity in this regard is anybody’s guess.)

Again, when Kimmerling and Migdal speak of the intermingling of religious symbols and motivations in the current intifada, they write that “national motives” and “religious symbols” also figure “increasingly, on the Israeli side.” But is this “balance” really true? Do most Israelis, when trying to contain and to suppress Palestinian violence, declare that they are fighting for Judaism or

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its sacred sites, including the Temple Mount? Do they believe, like all Hamas and Islamic Jihad members, and most Fatah terrorists, that they are serving God's purpose and are assured of heavenly rewards when they die in God's war? Does Sharon, like Arafat, speak of "a million martyrs" whom he is willing to sacrifice for the cause?

KIMMERLING AND MIGDAL'S book is liberally studded with factual errors. Often the mistakes are important; occasionally they merely display the authors' biases. They refer to "Sir John Philby" as the "British High Commissioner" in Transjordan in the 1920s—in fact, Harry St. John Philby was the British "Resident" in Transjordan (there was never a British "High Commissioner" in Jordan, and the only relevant high commissioner was the one in Palestine, who was also nominally responsible for Transjordan). They refer to the "two Christian Maronite villages" of "Bir'm" and "Ikrit"—in fact, Iqrit was Greek Catholic. They write that Jaffa fell to the Haganah on April 22, 1948 and Haifa on May 13—in fact, the reverse is true. They write that "starting on December 8, [1947]" the Palestinian forces "managed to capture isolated Jewish neighborhoods and settlements"—in fact, they tried but failed to capture a single Jewish neighborhood or settlement in the course of the war (the only settlements to fall were those conquered by the armies of Jordan, Egypt, and Syria, in May and June, though in one or two instances the Jordanians were assisted by Palestinian militiamen). They write that Fawzi al-Qawuqji's Arab Liberation Army entered Palestine in March 1948—in fact, many, perhaps most, of its troops had entered the country already in January and February. They adduce the "Khartoum [Arab] summit conference in the summer of 1968—the famous meeting in which the Arab League issued its notorious three no's to Israel: no negotiation, no recognition, no peace"—but Khartoum took place in late August and early September 1967. They misrepresent the Battle of Karamah of March 1968 as one in which "the Palestinians (aided by Jordanian artillery) ambushed the Israelis, killing as many as 25 soldiers"—in fact, the Israelis lost 33 dead (and 161 wounded), mostly to Jordanian tank and artillery fire. (There was no Palestinian "ambush," and Arafat himself fled Karamah at the start of the battle.) They write of the "peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1980"—in fact, it was signed in March 1979. They call Abu Alaa, the second or third man in the P.A. hierar-

chy, Ahmad Khuri—in fact, his name is Suleiman Ahmad Qurai. They remark that the Israeli-Palestinian flare-up in September 1996 was the result of the Israelis opening a tunnel "which extended underneath *haram al-sharif*"—in fact, the tunnel ran outside of, and parallel to, the western boundary wall of the *haram*. (This is important, as the Palestinian rioting was sparked by the rumor—which Kimmerling and Migdal here turn into fact—that Israel was tunneling under, and damaging, the compound.) They refer in this connection to forty Palestinians killed—but they fail to mention the fifteen or so Israeli dead in this Palestinian-initiated shootout. And so on, endlessly.

But the book's biggest factual shortcoming lies in omission (subsequently compounded by gross inaccuracy)—the omission of any discussion of what happened in the negotiations of 2000 and January 2001, from Camp David through the Clinton proposals to Taba. In a book that purports to update the reader to 2002 and assumes (as I do) that what happened in 2000 was a historical watershed, the omission is staggering and irresponsible. All that Kimmerling and Migdal tell us is that "the course of these talks have been covered extensively elsewhere." There are no descriptions of what Barak offered in July and how Arafat responded, no details about what Clinton offered in December and how the two sides responded. (Israel immediately accepted the Clinton package; the Palestinians procrastinated and then, in effect, said no.) There is nothing about what happened at Taba in January 2001. Only this: "Suffice it to say here that, despite many subsequent recriminations, the two sides settled most of the outstanding issues between them."

This is hogwash; even Palestinian spokesmen don't make such a claim. In fact, a deep chasm separated the Israelis and the Palestinians on all major issues—at Camp David, in responses to the Clinton proposals, and again at Taba. By the end of the Camp David summit, Barak, at Clinton's prodding, had agreed to Israeli withdrawal from 100 percent of Gaza and 90 to 91 percent of the West Bank; the uprooting of most of the settlements; and the establishment of a Palestinian state, with Israeli or American troops controlling the Jordan River line, and with some form of Palestinian functional control over most of the Arab districts of East Jerusalem. The Palestinians responded to these proposals by unleashing a new intifada and by stating that they were willing to settle for nothing less than the entirety of the territories and the uprooting of all the settlements, full sovereignty over

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Arab East Jerusalem including the Old City, sole Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount, and the "right of return" to Israel for all of the Palestinian refugees.

In December, Clinton submitted—and then published—his proposals: Israeli withdrawal from 100 percent of the Gaza Strip and 94 to 96 percent of the West Bank (with substantial territorial compensation for the Palestinians from Israeli territory); the uprooting of most of the settlements (with the settlers remaining in the 4 to 6 percent of the West Bank that was to remain in Israeli hands or moving to Israel proper); Palestinian sovereignty over the Arab-populated districts of East Jerusalem and over half or three-quarters of the Old City, and sovereignty over the surface area of the Temple Mount (with, implicitly, Israeli sovereignty over the earth underneath, which presumably contains the remains of the First and Second Temples); and a "right of return" for the refugees limited to the areas of the West Bank and Gaza that would become the Palestinian state and massive funding for the refugees' rehabilitation. Barak and his Cabinet accepted these parameters within forty-eight hours; the Palestinian Authority procrastinated and then rejected them, insisting on complete Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount, top and bottom, and sovereignty over the whole of the West Bank, and the "right of return" to Israel.

The subsequent discussions in Taba were held a fortnight before the Israeli general elections in which Sharon trounced Barak. Given the timing, both sides understood that the negotiations could not be successfully concluded and that they therefore lacked real political significance—or, as Muhammad Dahlan, one of the Palestinian negotiators later put it, that they were *barta barta*, nonsense. At the press conference at the end of Taba, Israel's chief negotiator, Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami, putting his best face on things, declared that the two sides had never been closer to an agreement. But Abu Ala, the chief Palestinian negotiator, when asked about the refugees, flatly declared that the Palestinians continue to insist on the right of return. It appears that Yossi Beilin had variously proposed that Israel accept back a token 40,000 refugees or tens of thousands per year over several years, and the Palestinians had refused.

The Palestinians, or some Palestinians, apparently agreed to cede to Israel 2 to 2.5 percent of the West Bank in exchange for territorial compensation elsewhere—but after the meeting they denied that they had agreed to anything less than the entirety of the West Bank. It is unclear whether the

negotiators had Arafat's authorization to make any territorial concession. In any event, they rejected Clinton's proposed cession of 4 to 6 percent of the West Bank. And they continued to insist on sole Palestinian sovereignty over the whole of the Temple Mount, rejecting Barak's and Clinton's various proposals: U.N. Security Council control of the site; a joint Israeli-Palestinian condominium; and "divine sovereignty" (meaning neither Palestinian nor Israeli sovereignty, with the Palestinians continuing to exercise de facto control, as they have since 1967). All this diplomatic disagreement Kimmerling and Migdal weirdly summarize by observing that the "two sides [had] settled most of the outstanding issues between them."

In December 2000, Clinton set out the

guidelines for an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. Those guidelines, whether or not Yasir Arafat or Ariel Sharon like them, remain the only basis for a reasonable peace that provides both peoples with a modicum of justice and security. But the Palestinians will first have to give up their dream of destroying Israel and discard their insistence on the "right of return." Their leaders will have to tell their people—in the camps outside Tyre and Beirut and Damascus and Gaza and Nablus and Amman—that there will be no return to the garden, that the price of that dream is too high. And Sharon, or his successor, will have to give up the dream of a Greater Israel. But I do not see these happy developments happening anytime soon. I fear that we are in for a long and bloody haul. ■

Richard Jenkins Poor Cricket

THE VICTORIANS
By A.N. Wilson
(W.W. Norton, 544 pp., \$35)

A N. WILSON IS A CLEVER and versatile man. He is the author of a dozen novels, variable in quality, the best of which are amusing and skillfully constructed, but with an undertone of moral seriousness—slightly camp but oddly touching. He is a prolific newspaper columnist in Britain. Capable of abrupt changes of opinion, he has written both a book of Christian apologetics and a fierce attack on Christianity—an inconsistency that some may take to show independence of mind and others may regard as a sign of a fundamental lack of seriousness. An example of his mutability, on a smaller scale, occurs in his new book, in his assessment of the two converts from Anglicanism who became cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church in the later Victorian age: in the past he has expressed a warm devotion to John Henry Newman, but now he declares himself unable to understand how anyone could put Newman above Henry Manning. He has written several biogra-

phies, his subjects including Walter Scott, Tolstoy, C.S. Lewis, and Hilaire Belloc. One of his novels is set in Victorian England, and another revolves around the efforts of a group of enthusiasts to rescue a Victorian church from demolition.

He seems the ideal author, in sum, for a book called *The Victorians*, and I looked forward to it eagerly. It did not match my expectations, though there is a good deal in it to appreciate. Wilson has a novelist's feel for the symbolic or ironic scene: he ends, for example, with the warships that attended the passage of Queen Victoria's body from the Isle of Wight, where she died, to the mainland—not only British vessels but ships from France, Portugal, Japan, "and four grey-masted ironclads flying the red, white and black German ensign, vastly overshadowing the others in strength and size." He has a novelist's eye for eccentrics, such as the peer who avoided sitting down because of his conviction that "an honourable part of his person was made of glass," or William Gifford Palgrave, twice converted from his ancestral Judaism to Roman Catholicism, who lived for some years in the Arabian desert dressed as a sheik in the hope of converting the natives to Christianity and ended his life as British ambassador to Uruguay. By far the longest quotation of anything that Wilson supplies is an account of a dinner given by the

Richard Jenkins is professor of classics at Oxford University and visiting professor at Boston University.

British commanders in the Crimea for their Russian counterparts during a term of truce, with the menu complete. But this quirkiness sits awkwardly with the parts of his book that aspire to earnestness.

Wilson seems to have two purposes: to present a chronological survey of the Victorian age, with the emphasis on social, military, and political history; and to offer a personal and selective picture of the culture of the time, through a kaleidoscopic display of people and events, some well known, some surprising and out-of-the-way. The obvious danger in such a project is of falling between two stools, and it has not been avoided. In his preface Wilson describes his book as a "portrait of an age," consciously comparing his work to that of G. M. Young. It is an odd comparison. Young's *Portrait of an Age*, which appeared in 1936, is one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century history-writing; and it may still be the best thing to hand for someone who wants a quick route to understanding early- and mid-Victorian Britain. It is short—essentially an extended essay—and the distillation of long thought and deep learning. Wilson's book, by contrast, is sprawling and diffuse; it gives the impression of rapid assimilation, of an author whose reading has been remarkably wide but sometimes careless. His political history is unlikely to satisfy anybody: it is too fitful and incomplete for the reader unfamiliar with the period, too superficial for those who know it well.

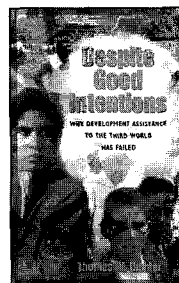
Any writer who takes as broad a subject as the Victorians is bound to leave a lot out, but some of Wilson's gaps are much too large. He says nothing about the railways and next to nothing about industrialization of any kind. There is an excellent chapter on Darwin, but otherwise Victorian science is effectively absent; Faraday is not even mentioned. Even if you believe, with P. G. Wodehouse, that the Victorians were not to be trusted with a trowel and a pile of bricks, it seems strange to say nothing about Victorian architecture (except for the Houses of Parliament, which is anyway half a pre-Victorian building). But the real problem is that Wilson's omissions distort the age that he is describing.

A big surprise, from a writer of Wilson's sardonic bent, is that his book should be so persistently priggish and politically correct. He constantly scolds the Victorians for failing to live up to the required standards of racial sensitivity, feminist awareness, economic justice, and the rest. And, of course, if we seek in the Victorians that humane and liberal enlightenment that we find so deeply pleasing as we contemplate it

in ourselves, we are destined to disappointment. His emphasis is on the brutalities, the miseries, and the failures of the age. So we get full coverage of the cruelty with which the poor were treated in the early Victorian workhouse, of the Irish famine, the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the Boer War, the slums. And Wilson describes these dark matters well. But surely we need to judge the Victorians by the standards of their time: how did Britain compare with other nations, for example? Oddly enough, Wilson recognizes this in his last chapter, in a couple of hasty paragraphs; but the rest of the book has been so unrelentingly censorious that this peroration reads like an embarrassed attempt at a quick fix.

QUEEN VICTORIA HAS BEEN AS successful as anyone in history in stamping her name upon an epoch: she is up there with Augustus, Charlemagne, and Elizabeth I. Yet the Victorian age is an odd concept, when one stops to think about it: why should a period be defined by the death of one old man, William IV in 1837, and the death of one old woman sixty-three years later? All periodization is artificial, but one could well imagine another rhythm. The period from Waterloo to 1850 might be thought of as a "long Regency"—the age of Pickwick and factory acts, the birth agony of the industrial age. From the 1850s to the late 1870s was the high noon of Victorian self-confidence and belief in progress; and from the 1880s to World War I Britain lived through a "long Edwardian age," a period in which imperial swagger, growing military and economic insecurity, and the development of democratic institutions oddly mingled. Yet it is impossible for us now to get the idea of a Victorian age out of our heads, and indeed we need not try, provided that we treat the Victorian age as a story rather than a state; a dynamic conception, not a static one.

Wilson's mistake is to underestimate the scale of this transformation. A rather mysterious achievement of Victorian Britain, for example, was to evolve without violence from an aristocratic oligarchy to a kind of mass democracy. Hardly any country on the continent of Europe made the transition to the twentieth century without armed conflict or revolution, while in the United States half a million people died in a civil war. Wilson hardly seems to notice this vast, peaceful evolution of the British state. Indeed, he appears to think that nothing much changed, claiming that Britain is still an oligarchy today and always has been. This is the kind of glib cynicism that



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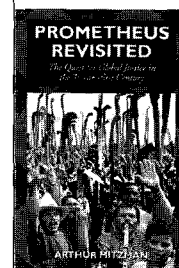
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might pass muster in a newspaper column, but it should not have survived a serious writer's second thoughts.

Time and again, Wilson sees the ugly aspects of Victorian life and experience but neglects the historical process of which they were a part. The fact is that many ancient oppressions become visible to us in the Victorian age because they scandalized the Victorians themselves. Yes, women were denied many rights and freedoms (Wilson declares that they had no more rights than American slaves, another of those silly statements that a moment's reflection would dispel.) But so they had been always and everywhere. The significant fact in the Victorian age is that women started to protest and to get themselves heard: the slow process of emancipation began. Yes, the workhouses were harsh and brutal, but Victorian reforms got rid of them. Yes, the birthpangs of the industrial age brought about new kinds of exploitation, but these shocked the consciences of many people, and social legislation, beginning with the factory acts a few years before Victoria came to the throne, gradually removed at least the worst abuses. Drainage is not a romantic subject, but the heroic sewer-

building of the 1850s transformed the health and the life expectancy of millions.

WILSON DEPICTS VICTORIAN Britain as pretty hellish for most of its population, and this presents him with a problem: if the place was so horrible and the people were so oppressed, why was there no specter of revolution in the nineteenth century, or at least none in the second half of it? (In the first decade of Victoria's reign there were still fears of serious civil disturbance, as there had been for twenty years before, but thereafter British society seemed immensely stable.) Wilson sees the difficulty, and his answer lies in the ruthlessness that he attributes to the ruling class: the wretched in the London slums, in his view, were cowed by the knowledge that if they tried to storm the West End, they would be put down by force of arms. This is simply bizarre, and it reminds one, again, of how much Wilson leaves out. For the really curious thing about *The Victorians* is that most of the Victorians are absent from it.

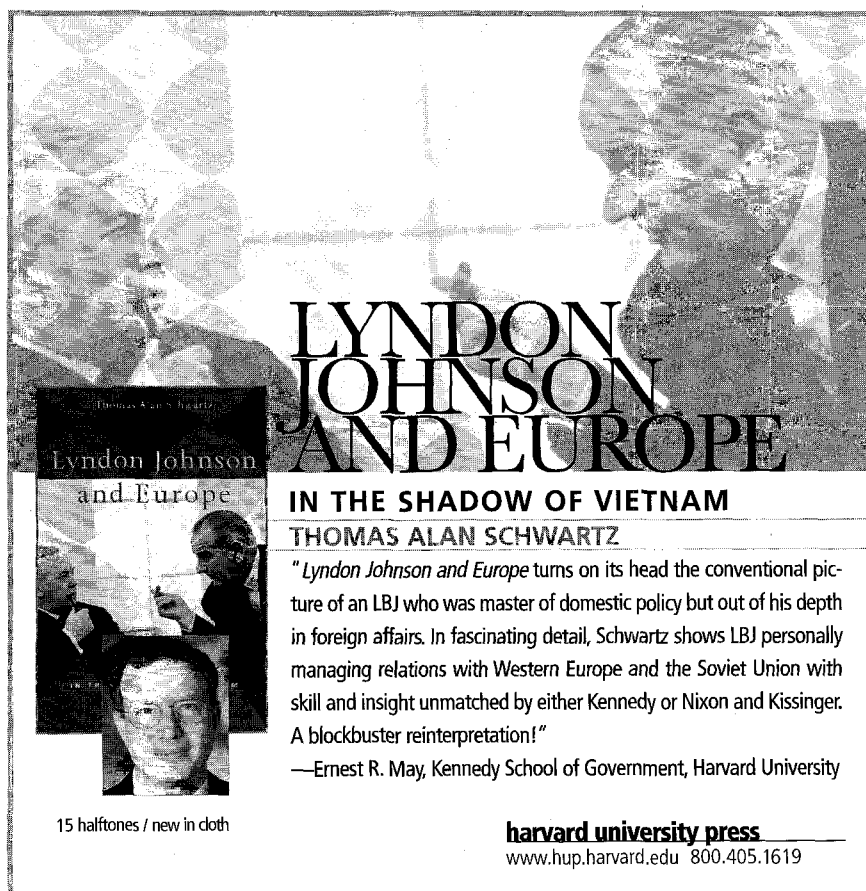
Wilson focuses on two classes of people: the very grand, right at the top of the heap, and the downtrodden, right at the bottom.

By far his most prominent personage is the queen herself, and he gives a splendidly vivid portrait of her personality, an odd yet entirely coherent mixture of sense and silliness, propriety and passion, moralism and selfishness. Prince Albert is one of Wilson's heroes, and this leads him to a wild exaggeration of his importance. Wilson comes close to saying that if Albert had lived longer, World War I might not have occurred, and then, changing tack, he suggests that Albert's influence would have grown so great that it might have driven the British to abolish their monarchy. Meanwhile he neglects two immense classes, perhaps the most important of all in Victorian society: the bourgeoisie and what their superiors called the respectable working class.

British history combines a great deal of class conflict with a strong national cohesion. This is not easy to explain, but a part of the explanation is surely that the bourgeoisie and so much of the working class shared the value of respectability. That does not mean that the working class was passive: the later nineteenth century sees the development of the trades unions, which were to play so dominant a part in British life until Margaret Thatcher tamed them in the 1980s. Victorian working people could take satisfaction from being citizens of the world's greatest power; and, however cramped their existences, they mostly shared an expectation that their lives and the lives of their children would get steadily better. In these ways, they were perhaps closer to modern America than to modern Britain.

Very properly, Wilson's excursions into popular culture take him to the music hall, even though its great period spilled over into the Edwardian age and beyond. Marie Lloyd was the most popular of all music-hall performers—what was the secret of her success? “Apart from the release of risqué humour,” Wilson writes, “she provided the audience with a reflection, an embodiment of their own hideous lives.” Well, no doubt some of her audience lived hideous lives, but I think that most of them would have considered Wilson's comment insulting. He takes perhaps her most famous song, “My old man said follow the van,” and points out that it is “about being evicted, piling one's few pathetic belongings on to a cart and getting drunk.” This is true as a matter of strict fact, but it is misleading in terms of tone. Wilson quotes the chorus, ending thus:

I dillied, I dallied, I dallied and
I dillied,



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Lost me way and don't know where
to roam.
Who's going to put up the old iron
bedstead
If I can't find my way home?

In fact, the second to last line changes each time the chorus is sung, and Wilson has quoted the second verse. In the first verse the line is "I stopped off on the way to have the old half quartern" (that is, a pint of beer), and the last is "You can't trust the specials like the old time coppers"—in other words, they are about boozing and having a bit of hanky-panky. The wonder of Marie Lloyd was her immense vulgar vitality, her irrepressible appetite for life. The limitation of the British music hall, in fact, was its constant cheeriness; when one compares it with the blues or with Edith Piaf, say, it can seem two-dimensional. But it does suggest how robust the British working class was, and, in spite of everything, how stable and secure.

WHEREAS THE MUSIC HALL was wholly a working-class creation, the development of competitive sports involved all the classes. Wilson gives less than half a page to this topic, but there are few areas in which the Victorians did more to make our modern world. The most widely played and watched sports in the world today—soccer, cricket, tennis, golf, and rugby football—were all established and codified on their present basis in Victorian Britain. It is hard for us to realize how strange the British passion for playing sport seemed to foreign observers; they often compared it to ancient Greece. Hippolyte Taine reported that he had even heard of a team of Englishmen traveling to Australia to play cricket, as athletes had once traveled the length of the Mediterranean to compete at Olympia. He implies that the story must be merely *ben trovato*, but of course it was true. Cricket matches between England and Australia remain the oldest rivalry in international sport; the first international sporting contest of any kind seems also to have been a cricket game, but it was, surprisingly, between the United States and Canada.

The United States was subsequently excluded from international cricket on the grounds that it was not a part of the Empire. If, as seems likely, this obscure decision killed off cricket in North America and permitted the rise of baseball, it had momentous consequences for modern American life. (It is a literary curiosity, by the way, that the first recorded reference to baseball

comes in *Northanger Abbey*, whereas cricket is the game played by the young people in *Little Women*.) Equally, the Victorians who set up the Football Association (the governing body of English soccer) can have had no inkling of what they were starting. They were gentlemen (the universities of Oxford and Cambridge still have representation on the F.A., and the Old Etonians were recurrently among the early winners of the F.A. Cup), but they had inadvertently created what soon became a national institution, and essentially a working-class institution.

MODERN GOVERNMENTS ARE well aware of the use of sport for strengthening national solidarity, but the Victorians had something else: they had the Empire. Wilson is vivid on the crimes and the blunders of empire, but he misses the quieter part of the story. After discussing unrest in the Caribbean in the 1830s, he observes that "Jamaica, as far as history is concerned, can be forgotten for another quarter-century"—until, that is, an incipient rebellion was harshly suppressed. But that is to "forget" precisely what is most important. It is not surprising that an empire should be subject to rebellions and colonial wars; what is surprising is that they were not more frequent. Like a number of historians, Wilson says that the British could not govern its Indian Empire except by consent, and in some sense this must be true, but it raises the complex question of how that consent was gained.

Wilson devotes a whole chapter to the Indian Mutiny, but he shows little interest in India thereafter (a chapter on "Kipling's India" has Kipling rather than India for its subject). The Victorian experience was the reverse of this: British governments had paid too little attention to India before the Mutiny broke out in 1857, but they were intensely involved thereafter. Empire requires commitment. It may also require the readiness to suffer defeats and humiliations (as the British in these years to the Afghans, the Russians, the Zulus, the Boers) and to press on regardless. A large amount of idealism, as well as commerce and plunder, went into making and sustaining the British Empire. Some may want to argue that the ideology of empire was self-serving and self-deluding, but what cannot be denied is that their empire required the British to give as well as to take. Even empires a great deal more exploitative than the British have demanded engagement by the ruling power and even, in a sense, sacrifice. The cemeteries of India bear witness to how many British died young

in a distant exile, sometimes in battle, more often from disease and the exigencies of the climate. At one point in the later nineteenth century, as many as one-quarter of the graduates of Balliol, the leading college at Oxford, were going into the Indian Civil Service. And after the Boer War some of the most brilliant young minds in Britain went out to South Africa to join Lord Milner's staff. "Milner's kindergarten," they were called.

These considerations bear upon our present anxieties. Despite what many commentators say, the United States is—happily—not now an imperial power, because it has no inclination toward the sort of engagement that empire entails. One has only to try and imagine today's best and brightest flocking into post-Saddam Iraq from Wall Street and think tanks and schools of government to see how different from Queen Victoria's empire is the present American hegemony. It is a paradox of the Victorians that they were both insular and, through their empire, cosmopolitan. Wilson condescends too far to his subjects, but he does seem to recognize another paradox: that, remote as many of their values and assumptions now seem to us, they still have a good deal to teach us. ■

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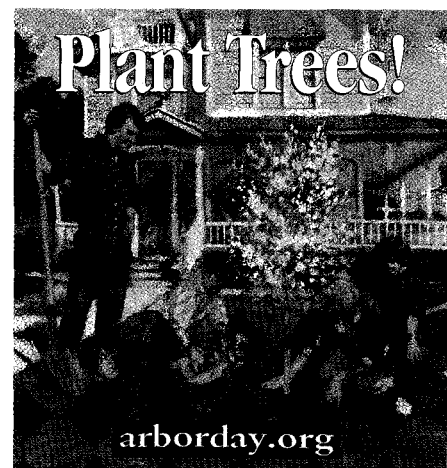
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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Upside-down Cake

THE PRESS HAS REPORTED that the Iraqi regime spent the prewar months scrutinizing tapes of *Black Hawk Down* for military lessons. I've begun to suspect that they've also been studying White House press conferences. How else to explain the eerie similarity between the pedagogical styles of Saddam Hussein's chief spokesman, Mohammed Said Al Sahaf, and Ari Fleischer? Both are highly disciplined in repeating their insult of choice for their opponents—Al Sahaf preferring “criminal” and Fleischer “obstructionist.” Those who watch Fleischer in action are familiar with his practice of escaping questions with long, convoluted answers intended to befuddle the press. Al Sahaf has mastered the same skill. At a press conference last week, for example, he was asked why Iraqi troops were equipped with chemical-protection suits if Iraq does not have any chemical weapons. “All the armies, when there are wars, especially when there is aggressive war like the American-British war against Iraq, and they're trying to invade, which they are trying now and which we will foil it, hopefully, the standard that by the armies, the equipment of the fighters and the—we should be among these equipment should be a mask and a description of any weapons,” he explained. After this, the reporters had no choice but to change the subject. But the real trademark of both spokesmen is their talent for remaining utterly unflappable in the face of bad news. Rather than attempt to cast unpleasant information in the most favorable light, both spokesmen prefer instead to deny it altogether. Here's Fleischer on February 28, when asked about Bush's approval rating, which had dropped almost continuously for the previous year from the mid-70s to the mid-50s: “I don't think the president looks at it that way. I think there's been remarkable stability to his polling numbers, frankly.” This sort of straight-faced stiff-arming is Fleischer's specialty, but his Iraqi counterpart is just as good. When asked last week about American claims of capturing Saddam International Airport, Al Sahaf replied, “We kicked them out. We pulverized them, defeated them in the outside of the airport.” You wouldn't think the leadership of the world's greatest democracy could

match up with a totalitarian state in terms of message discipline. That Bush has been able to do so ought to be a source of true pride.

JUST AS TECHNOLOGY HAS REVOLUTIONIZED war, so too has it revolutionized war punditry. Debates that once took years and consumed reams of paper have been reduced to instantaneous affairs thanks to computer databases such as Google and LexisNexis. The first hints of this revolution could be seen in the wake of the 1991 Gulf war, when pro-war pundits mockingly recycled the quotes of doves who had predicted a bloody quagmire. It was barely one week into the second Gulf war that the doves began to exact their revenge by accusing their opponents of predicting a cakewalk. The problem for hawks is that one of them actually *did* predict the war would be a cakewalk. (“I believe demolishing Hussein's military power and liberating Iraq would be a cakewalk,” wrote former Reaganite and current Defense Policy Board member Ken Adelman last year.) And so, at the first sign of trouble, doves seized upon this unfortunate turn of phrase. A Frank Rich column from March 30 approvingly quoted Peter Arnett as a brave dissenter from the cakewalk consensus. “It's déjà vu all over again, the idea that this would be a walkover, the idea that the people of Basra would throw flowers at the Marines,” Arnett told Rich. “The war is not the cakewalk Bush forecast. Ordinary Iraqis are not greeting American troops with flowers, while U.S. casualties mount,” wrote Robert Kuttner, my former editor at *The American Prospect*.

IN THE FACE OF THESE RECRIMINATIONS, conservatives immediately panicked. Nobody in the administration, they insisted, had ever predicted an easy war. (In truth, even putting aside Adelman, who is technically not a member of the administration, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Richard Myers had predicted “a short, short conflict,” and Vice President Dick Cheney had said much the same.) Still, the perception of a cakewalk had to come from somewhere. If it didn't come from the right, where could it have originated? It was around this time that a quote from a former president began to circulate. “To its credit, the Bush administration was careful not to say—or even

much imply—that Gulf War II would be a breeze,” asserted *National Review*. “The only major figure who did was the immediate ex-president, Bill Clinton. Days before the opening of hostilities, he said, ‘This war is going to be over in a flash.’” So it turned out that the nation had *not* been led to believe in the promise of easy war by Bush. The nation had been led to believe in the promise of easy war by Clinton! But then a funny thing happened. After a short pause, the U.S. military resumed its drive to Baghdad, and the war since then has gone about as easily as the hawks predicted. Iraqis actually have given flowers to the soldiers. The war now looks like, well, something of a cakewalk. Not literally, of course—the soldiers have yet to be presented with actual cakes. But, as wars go, if conquering virtually an entire country while sustaining (as of press time) around 100 combat deaths doesn't qualify as a quick, easy war, it's hard to say what does. Hawks would now be in a position to gloat, if only they had kept their nerve in the first few days. Now the only person they can credit for having the foresight to predict the course of the war is Clinton.

ONE OF THE MAIN ACCUSATIONS AGAINST cakewalk hawks is that so few of them have experienced war. Well, I've never been anywhere near a war, but I have been in a cakewalk. The op-ed warriors make it sound glamorous, but, for those of us on the ground, it was a grueling ordeal. It happened at a summer fair at my elementary school. Like a Vietnam veteran with flashbacks of Khe Sanh, my memory of the event is limited to hazy, chaotic fragments due to its traumatic nature, or possibly due to the fact that I was only five years old at the time. In any event, I can't recall exactly how it worked, only that it had some vague resemblance to musical chairs, with a cake as the prize. It took the form of a long, circular march underneath the blazing sun on an asphalt parking lot with a bunch of other scared, confused kids. (When you picture this scene, the soundtrack you should have in your head is “Gimme Shelter” by the Rolling Stones.) I was under the impression that I would receive cake at the end of it, but that turned out to be just one more of the lies the authorities told us during the 1970s. And so, when I hear the pundits talk about a cakewalk as if it were as simple as destroying an Iraqi armored division, I worry that they will lead future generations into cakewalks without a clear understanding of what that entails. Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.

JONATHAN CHAIT

School Choice Works

Herbert J. Walberg is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution; a member of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education; and University Scholar and research professor emeritus of education and psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Voucher advocates see parental choice as a means to an end—improving education through enhanced competition—but opponents fear such privatization would harm public schools. **Early research on American small-scale voucher programs suggests that choice may yield beneficial effects.** A massive, nationwide study of vouchers in Sweden proves the case.

The Swedish voucher experience is significant for several reasons. It extends over sufficient time for the supply of independent schools to expand and for public schools to respond. It has the potential to involve all the children in the nation and includes almost three hundred urban and rural municipalities. Unlike many American choice programs, few restrictions were placed on the entry of new independent schools. Unlike capitalistic America, moreover, Sweden is a socialist or mixed economy with a huge public sector, making the success of privatization unexpected.

Until 1992, Sweden's public schools were funded by the national government and operated by local municipalities. Then the national government adopted major reforms: Parents were allowed to choose their children's schools. Municipalities were required to fund approved independent schools at 85 percent of the per-student cost of public schools. A national agency was given the responsibility for approving new independent schools. To receive government funding, independent schools had to forgo tuition charges, meet established educational standards, and admit students without regard to ability, religion, or ethnicity.

Now "almost anyone can set up a school and receive public funding," according to Swedish economists Fredrik Bergström and Mikael Sandström, who conducted the voucher study. They add, "Sweden

has become one of the most permissive countries in the Western world with regard to allowing parents to choose schools freely."

The reforms produced none of the negative consequences feared by choice opponents. Far from hurting the public schools, **competition from new independent schools has led to an improvement in the public schools.** As in other markets for goods and services, greater competition leads to greater improvement.

The number of independent schools increased fivefold, and their student enrollments increased fourfold. Although many of these schools were established in affluent areas, they also expanded rapidly in less-privileged areas serving working-class and immigrant populations. A majority of the new independent schools are specialized or pedagogy based, not religion based. Corporations run 30 percent of the independent schools, and some companies are expanding rapidly.

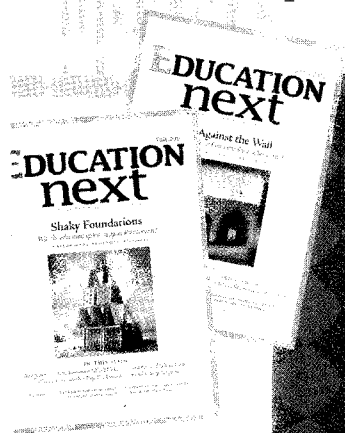
The researchers also found no indication that higher-income earners chose independent schools to a greater extent than low-income earners, no evidence that freedom of choice led to increased economic segregation, and nothing to indicate that independent schools have fewer special-needs students.

"The main lesson to be learned from the Swedish reforms is that school choice works," conclude Bergström and Sandström. It's also far from being "a radical libertarian experiment," they note, because the schools are still entirely financed by public funds.

School markets work in Sweden. Is there any reason why they shouldn't work in the United States?

— Herbert J. Walberg

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